

HONORED IN THE BREACH.

By JULIA MAGRUDER, author of "Across the Chasm," "At Anchor," etc.

COMPLETE

MARCH, 1888

LIPPINCOTT'S

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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JULIA MAGRUDER,

AUTHOR OF "ACROSS THE CHASM," "A MAGNIFICENT PLEBEIAN," ETC.

PHILADELPHIA:

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.

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LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

MARCH, 1888.

HONORED IN THE BREACH.

CHAPTER I.

EASTMERE was thronged with visitors; its popularity as a summer resort had never been so great. The immense hotels were stretched to their utmost capacity, the public cottages crowded and the private ones agreeably filled. The spring, if drainable, would have been long since drained by the multitude of consumers of medicinal waters. The drives were a crush by day and the ball-rooms a crush by night, and the season was at its height.

One of the most desirable of the private residences had been closed during the early part of the season, and was now just thrown open for the occupancy of its owner, Miss Gladys Montaveril, and her step-mother. The two ladies had been in Europe since immediately after the death of Mr. Lucius Montaveril, the husband of one and the father of the other, and this season at Eastmere was their first reappearance in society since their mourning. Mrs. Montaveril was rather young and rather pretty, and Gladys was much younger and much prettier, and, since the latter was not only a beauty but an heiress in her own right, it was not remarkable that the opening of the long-closed cottage should be looked upon by the company at Eastmere as an event of importance.

The two ladies whom chance had thrown together thus intimately were as unlike as could well be imagined. But as the younger had very much the stronger will, and the elder had the good sense to yield to it, they got on together with an appearance of perfect harmony. Gladys was lavishly generous, and Mrs. Montaveril, whose own fortune was insignificant in comparison, reaped the benefit of this generosity and knew better than to quarrel with her bread and butter.

One morning, during the first week of her stay at Eastmere, Miss Montaveril waked early. She had been up very late at a ball the night before, and she felt feverish and tired. After tossing restlessly on her

bed for a while, in the vain endeavor to go to sleep again, she got up and crossed the room in little softly-slipped feet, and, throwing open the blinds, looked out upon the lovely dawn. The sun was just emerging from his pink cloud-bed and casting his golden light upon the quiet world. The heavy dew, that lay on leaves and grass and shrubbery, freshened the morning air and drew a pungent odor from a bed of mint in a garden, some distance off, which a buoyant little breeze caught up and wafted away. The birds had sung their morning songs and gone off to the day's work; and only here and there a tremulous twitter betrayed the presence of some deserted fledgling. The landscape everywhere was motionless, save for the trembling of leaves and swaying of flowers in the garden down below. In a lane outside the enclosure a homeless cat was straying, stepping gingerly through the long damp grass, her very tail held high, in protest against the heavy dew.

Gladys threw a dressing-gown around her, and leaned her arms upon the broad window-sill, thinking. This world of reality—nature's own pure face, the golden glow of the sunshine, the blue of heaven, the green of earth—seemed such a different place from the crowded ball-room, the garish gas-light, the gorgeous artificialness, of a few hours back. In a few hours more that world would be upon her again and she would be one of the puppets moving about in it, and she shrank from the thought. She longed for a perpetuation of the impressions of this morning hour,—for nature,—for simplicity,—for reality. This young and healthy maiden, with the typical bed of roses spread for her repose, was discontented with her lot, and wished intensely for something that should be utterly different. Not that she would willingly have relinquished her worldly possessions and personal advantages, but she wanted something to give them value,—to make them other than the mere materiality they were. A very sad mood was upon her, as she leaned from her luxurious chamber, over her beautiful grounds, wrapped in silken draperies that covered a heavy heart. She was possessed by that worst kind of longing, which is ignorant of its own object. The tears welled up in her eyes, and before the mist had cleared away, she saw, coming slowly along the lane that bordered her grounds, a figure clad in deep black. It was a woman, and she was evidently young, though her face was hid behind her thick black veil, which fell also over something that she carried in her hands. Gladys watched attentively as the woman's figure took its way toward a little old-fashioned church at the top of the hill, which had a grave-yard attached to it, the white stones of which the girl had often looked at from her window. It was quite apart from the principal street, where the handsome modern church attended by the Eastmere visitors was situated.

Gladys presently lost sight of the figure among the trees in the church-yard, but there had been something about this woman that had so interested her that she determined to watch for her return. Before long she reappeared, walking with the same quiet motion, as if utterly unconscious of herself, and passed along the lane and out of sight.

Afterwards Gladys went to bed and fell into a heavy sleep, from which she awakened late, to find her maid softly moving about the room, making the preparations for her young lady's toilet, while the sounds

of rumbling vehicles and distant street-cries fell upon her ears with their unwelcome familiarity. Had she dreamed that early morning scene or really experienced it? It seemed far more like a dream than a reality. Surely those were the sounds and sights and feelings of another world, and that black-robed figure could not have been an inhabitant of this sphere, where people lived to wear gay clothes and go to balls and receive visits and carry out such plans as those to which her own engagements for the day committed her.

The next morning it happened, strangely enough, that Gladys waked at the same early hour, and her first consciousness was an impulse to go to the window and look out again for the dark-clad figure. She had not waited long when the lady appeared, accompanied this time by a chubby child carrying a handful of flowers. The child wore a little simple white dress, flowing free from the shoulders, and her rosy face, fresh from its morning bath, with its smoothly-brushed wavy hair falling backward, was surmounted by a bewitching white sun-bonnet, clean and fresh as a flower-cup, tied under her dimpled chin. Gladys was captivated by her at once. The little creature held on to the lady's hand, chattering and smiling, and the moment passed all too swiftly for the watcher at the window, who was now more than ever full of interest. She lingered until the pair had returned—the child empty-handed now—and passed out of sight.

When Miss Montaveril's maid, Molly, came into the room an hour later, her young mistress questioned her closely as to whether she could give any information about the lady and child. It seemed that Molly also had observed them and taken the interest to make inquiries, which had elicited the fact that the lady's name was Mrs. Acland, and she was a widow, living, with her only child, all the year round, in a small cottage, which the girl described to Gladys, who remembered to have observed it set back from the road behind a thick growth of vines and shrubs which almost concealed it from sight. Mr. Acland, the maid went on to say, had died at Eastmere a year or two back, and had been buried in the old cemetery, and the lady and child had never left the place.

After breakfast that morning Gladys renewed her inquiries as she sat with her step-mother, entertaining some visitors, who were old *habitues* of Eastmere, and learned all the details of the sad story of passionate love and sorrow. It was pictured as an ideally happy marriage, and the thought of death was made more terrible to the girl than it had ever been before, in view of the bright happiness it put out.

The story impressed Gladys deeply. The intense reality of a life such as this woman led was a strong appeal to a mind earnest by nature, but compelled by circumstances to occupy itself with trivialities. If she had cared for the trivialities she probably would not have minded that they were such, but it happened that she did not care for them in the least, and she was filled now with a strong desire to have a nearer insight into a life that presented the strongest possible contrast to her own.

Truth to tell, there was a reason why Miss Montaveril's life, just at present, was less than usually a contented one. She had brought with her from Europe the sense of a new element that had entered into her

existence, and it was a disturbing one. An important decision would be forced upon her soon, and she was restless and doubtful as to how she should settle it.

That afternoon Miss Montaveril, returning from a luncheon, had stepped from her carriage, and was entering the house, her mind full of the sights and sounds she had just turned her back upon, when, just before crossing the threshold of her door, she heard a child's voice saying, wistfully,—

"Oh, Mammy, I *wiss* I had a yose!"

Glancing in the direction of the sound, Gladys saw a little figure that she instantly recognized, accompanied by a stately old negro woman, whose head was surmounted by a tall plaid turban. It was Mrs. Acland's child and nurse.

Gladys turned hastily and descended the steps, gathering her sumptuous draperies in her hand, and crossing the lawn toward the spot where the pair were standing. The old woman was evidently rebuking the child, and urging her to come away.

"Do let her have a rose," said Gladys with a winning smile to the nurse.—"Here, little one," she added, breaking off a rich red rose and handing it to her.

The child took the flower, and, wrinkling up her little nose, buried it in the rose's crimson heart and sniffed its odor enjoyingly.

"Thank you, ma'am," said the old woman, courtesying.—"Thank the lady, Con, for giving you the flower."

The child lifted her head and turned her face up to be kissed, without speaking. She was evidently accustomed to but one mode of discharging her obligations.

As Mammy lifted her for the young lady to kiss, Gladys put out her arms and took the little creature and kissed her tenderly. Then she told her to come as often as she chose and pick flowers.

"Mammy, ath mother to let me," said the child, wistfully.

"Mrs. Acland will be very much obliged to you, ma'am," said the old woman, with a stately little courtesy, and, taking the child by the hand, she led her away.

Miss Montaveril went to a reception that evening, and met a host of gay, amusing people, and heard bright talk and agreeable speeches without limit, but somehow the strange hold that Mrs. Acland's history had taken upon her possessed her mind so strongly that thoughts of the widow and the child and the old colored woman were perpetually rising in her mind like beings from another world, and making a most incongruous medley in conjunction with the characters about her.

She woke next morning with the same confusion in her mind, and went to her window just in time to see the mother and child returning from their morning mission. Why was it that this vision of sadness always seemed to her a reality, and the gay pleasure-seeking all about it always seemed so hollow and unreal? Each was a phase of life. One was as much life as the other. It must have been because the soul within her was more attuned to sadness than mirth. Certainly the gayest scene she had ever mingled in had never touched her heart and inspired her mind as the sight of this woman's faithful grief had done.

She had but a dim idea of what it was,—that sorrow over an irclaimable love,—and she knew the face of pleasure well, and yet she felt within her a mysterious kinship with Mrs. Acland, while the throng of gay and pleasure-seeking people by whom she had all her life been surrounded seemed to her as aliens.

As soon as breakfast was over that morning, Gladys put on her hat and pinned a thick veil over her face, and started out on an expedition the object of which she mentioned to no one. Mrs. Montaveril wondered where she was going, but she was not in the habit of questioning her step-daughter when the latter chose not to volunteer information.

CHAPTER II.

ONCE outside the house, Gladys let herself out into the lane by a side-entrance, and, avoiding the streets where she might meet with acquaintances, turned her steps in the direction she had so often seen the mother and child take. In a few minutes she was standing at the entrance of the humble little church-yard. There was no difficulty in finding the spot she sought. The small lot, enclosed by a low iron railing, with its carefully-tended grass and freshly-blown flowers, above which rose up a tall white cross, stood out conspicuously from its neglected and forsaken surroundings. There was another cemetery, in connection with the new church, and this one had now been almost abandoned as a place of burial. The graves were mostly very old, and overrun with a rank growth of ivy and myrtle and ragged sprouts from the aspens and ailanthus-trees that shaded it densely, but a loving thought had guarded the sacred spot marked by the high white cross, and carefully kept down the encroaching undergrowth below, while, up above, the trees had been so trimmed and tended as to make sufficient space for the sunlight to penetrate to where the flowers bloomed above the blessed dead.

As Gladys lifted the latch of the little gate and entered, the place of death seemed to her to be pervaded by the vividness of a living love. If it be true that "our dead are never dead until we have forgotten them," surely the Arthur Acland whose name was cut, in merciless distinctness, on this cold white marble was vitally alive.

At the top of the cross was the monogram of the name of Christ, and across the arms the name of the quiet sleeper, and underneath three dates. Gladys read them, and knew that they recorded his birth, his marriage, and his death. The tears sprang to her eyes, and she fell upon her knees.

As the tear-mist cleared away she saw that she was kneeling on a dense growth of vines, which her dress had brushed aside from the base of the cross, thereby revealing some small but distinct lettering in the marble. She stooped to read it, drawing the vines gently away. On one side of the base was inscribed, "Erected by Constance, his wife," and on the other side, "I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

As Gladys read these words a passionate pain thrilled through her:

she sank backward to the ground and covered her face with her hands. There was no consolation for her in this inscription; it was but a spiritless form, except in so far as it conveyed to her mind a vivid insight into the strength of that human devotion that could not give up its love to death and the grave. Gladys was not irreligious, and so she read the words reverently, but she was unreligious, and therefore she found no definite hope in them.

There was nothing but sadness to her in this spot, a desolate unrelenting sadness that made the bird-voices in the trees, the vivid colors in the flowers, and the serene splendor of the summer sunshine a dreadful mockery to her. There were fresh-cut flowers on the grave, their stems in an earthen jar of water sunk in the green turf. She could smell their delicious fragrance as she knelt there and listened to the birds half protestingly and took in the beauty of the summer landscape spread around her. These things could be, in a world where there was the daily recurrence to some one of such a blighting grief as this! When she thought of what this woman's life had been as a wife, and contrasted it with what her life was now as a widow, she pitied her from her soul; and yet when she drew another contrast between the earnestness of this life, whether in joy or grief, and the aimlessness of her own, she felt a sort of pity for herself. This woman's existence, from youth to old age, must be one long sorrow and pain,—she realized that;—and yet what a treasure beyond price the mere memory of such a love must be! In that moment she too felt the truth that to have loved and lost might be better than never to have loved at all.

Poor Gladys! She was disturbed and perplexed this morning almost without knowing why. She was infinitely tired of the life she led. It seemed to her the most uninspiring and stupid she could possibly imagine. She wished she could care for the things that most of the women of her acquaintance found their interest in, but she had tried and she couldn't! She sometimes interpreted the restless reaching forward which she was so prone to as a longing for human love, given and received. But what did human love amount to, after all? The grave in front of her was the answer to that question. She was by no means sure that she wanted to love as this wife Constance had loved, or to be loved as she had been. The dread of the inevitable end would be too awful.

She left the old church-yard, and with slow and weary steps turned homeward. Her face was weary, too, as she crossed the threshold of her beautiful summer home, where a servant met her with a letter that had come for her by the morning's post. As the girl's eyes fell upon the envelope and she recognized the handwriting, her manner changed to a sudden interest, and a rising flush displaced the lassitude her countenance had worn. She took the letter and went at once to her own room to read it. There was no expression of expectant pleasure on her face as she broke the seal, though there was a perceptible agitation in her manner and her fingers trembled. Her face grew grave and troubled as she read the letter, which was very short, and merely said that the writer, having just arrived in New York, had been sorry to find her absent, and proposed, if quite agreeable to Miss Montaveril, to come

on, in a day or two, to Eastmere. He would, however, await her answer before making any definite plan.

And what should that answer be? Gladys threw aside her hat and gloves, and rested her elbows on her knees and her chin in her hands, thinking intently. Presently she took up the letter and read it through again. It was very characteristic, in spite of its brevity. It was like Reginald Locksly to compel her to commit herself to a certain amount of encouragement of his suit before he pressed it further. She smiled a little, as she thought of this, and the smile relaxed the rather severe expression of her face. Nothing could have been better expressed than this note was; no handwriting could have been more elegant, no stationery in better taste, to the last detail. And Gladys liked all this. She felt herself, it is true, very much apart from the frivolous worldlings among whom her lot was passed, but the very worldliest of them could not have been more exacting in the articles of their code, in all its minor details, than she was herself. She recognized the fact that it would be a very decided step to encourage him to come to Eastmere. She had never met a man so much to her taste as Mr. Locksly, and when they had chanced to make acquaintance during her recent travels in Europe, she had thought him, from the first, freer from objections than she ever expected a man to be. He had been travelling in the East for some time, and, though an American, was so cosmopolitan he seemed to possess the most attractive points of all nationalities,—at least so it seemed to her limited experience. They got on capitally together, and she had not expected that he would fall in love with or want to marry her, and she suspected that to him also it had been a surprise when he had found himself getting into that drift. And yet she was certain that no man's homage had ever been so agreeable to her before, and up to a certain point she had found it all very delightful. When it was just beginning to get beyond that point, however, the girl suddenly became aware of a feeling that she could define by no other word than fright. She was positively alarmed lest he should compel her to consider him in the light of a possible husband, and in that light she had never yet cared to consider any man. When Miss Montaveril suggested to herself the idea of remaining permanently unmarried, she turned away from the thought with distinct repulsion. She had long held to the unexpressed idea that the agreeable something that she believed to lie ahead was to reveal itself in matrimony, and she distinctly meant to marry. And yet when this most unobjectionable man of her acquaintance managed to convey to her the suggestion that he aspired to her hand, her impulse had been to run away from him; and during his absence on a few days' excursion, at the end of which he had proposed to himself to return and observe the progress of the seed he had left to fructify in Miss Montaveril's mind, she actually did take advantage of a sudden suggestion thrown out by her step-mother, and impulsively sail for America. She did not do so without counting the cost and estimating the probability that her suitor might not take the trouble to follow her, but that risk she was abundantly willing to run. Certainly, if he cared so little for her as that, she was not going to care at all for him! She had rather expected that he would write, and

was therefore a little startled to find him already in America, but the fact argued a degree of earnestness that was not unflattering. Now that he was near at hand, however, she felt no wish to have him nearer, although she could think of no man at Eastmere who was not put at a disadvantage by him. Somehow the thing seemed more distinctly defined in her mind now than it had been. She *didn't* want to marry a man she didn't love, and she didn't love this man! And yet she couldn't bear to prevent his coming, for she might never meet again a man so possible to love as this, and she was weary of this loveless, listless, uninteresting life. It was a perplexing quandary, and she felt utterly unable to decide how she should act. This perplexity and indecision made her gloomy, and every aspect of life that presented itself to her thoughts, from the frivolity of her own existence to the earnestness and sadness of the young widow's near by, looked so dreary and fruitless that she longed to escape the contemplation of them, and was glad when a summons to see visitors offered a diversion to her mind.

After the first of these visitors left, two ladies who were on very familiar terms in the house came in, and stayed to luncheon, and in the midst of the chatter and animation that this entailed the letter was almost forgotten. Gladys was not sorry that an engagement for the evening banished it still further from her mind, and she made a partially successful effort to throw the matter off, deciding that she would think it all over and act to-morrow morning.

A postponed responsibility of this sort is very apt to present itself with increased insistency after being kept waiting; and Gladys waked next morning with a feeling of deep despondency. It was much more her habit to take counsel of her inclination and impulse than her sense of duty, for she was self-willed, if not selfish; and if she could have been perfectly certain of what she wanted to do she would have done it, but unfortunately she was not certain of this. She was only sure of what she didn't want to do. She didn't want to write Mr. Locksly to come, and just as little did she want to prevent his coming. It was impossible for her to see any way out of the difficulty that it was not unpleasant to contemplate. It may seem almost ridiculous, but Gladys felt herself to be in great trouble, and could hardly control her impulse to give way to a fit of weeping. She got through breakfast as well as she could, and then came back to her room to write her letter. But she could not make up her mind. The more she reflected, the harder it seemed. She believed in her heart that it would be the part of wisdom in her to encourage Mr. Locksly's suit, and, indeed, to marry him. What earthly objection to him could she find? Not one, except that she did not love him, and could not imagine herself as ever growing to love him as she would want to love the man she married. But how was that? Was it not something akin to the passionate absorbing devotion that Mrs. Acland had given and received?—and what had it come to? The thought made her shudder.

The need had come to her which some time or other comes to every woman of earnest nature and strong feelings. She wanted a confessor and adviser, and where was she to turn? Never had the loneliness and isolation of her life come home to her so strongly. She would as

soon have thought of confiding her desires and perplexities to a kitten or a bird as to her step-mother, who, it must be said, had a very distinct idea of what she herself wanted and aimed at in this life, and would have been utterly unable to comprehend her step-daughter's difficulties. No matter whom her thoughts would turn toward, Gladys was conscious, all the time, of an almost irresistible drawing to go to Mrs. Acland and see if she couldn't get some help from her.

The moments hurried past, and the letter remained unwritten. She actually got out ink and paper and spread them before her, hoping for inspiration from some source, but when she seated herself and took up her pen she felt so utterly helpless that she could bear it no longer. She was used to having difficulties smoothed out of her path, and her present grievance was something new to her. There was but one possibility of help that seemed to be in the least hopeful, and without more ado she put on her hat and went down the stairs and out of the house, taking the road that led to Mrs. Acland's cottage. This woman had endured so much that sorrow must surely have taught her some wisdom, by which she could counsel and encourage others, and Gladys felt a vital need just now of both encouragement and counsel.

She let herself in at Mrs. Acland's gate, walked up the path, and, mounting the steps of the long vine-covered porch, paused on the threshold and waited. The windows that opened on this porch were raised, and Gladys could hear voices. She stood quite still, alarmed at the thought of her own boldness and half awe-struck at the idea of her nearness to that great and sacred grief. The day was very warm, and she had felt the sun oppressive as she walked along, but here all was cool and still and fragrant. Hardly knowing what she was doing, or whether she most wanted to go on or to escape, she took a step forward, and now the interior of the room was revealed to her. Her first impression was one of pleasure at the beauty and harmoniousness of the apartment, but this was swiftly lost in a feeling of surprise at the aspect of the figure that faced her. Instead of the woman clad in blackest mourning garments, with a face whose sadness she had almost dreaded, she saw a gentle, light-haired creature, in a loose white cotton morning gown, bending a lovely face that was full of something that was almost merriment upon the child who sat upon her knee. The little creature's tiny hand was doubled up very tight, and the heads of both were bent above it, regarding it with an intent interest.

"Deth adain!" the child was saying, her eyes twinkling with fun.

"Well, let me see," said the mother, ruminatingly. "It's—it's—it must be—a turkey-gobbler!" she ended, suddenly, as if struck with an inspiration.

The child threw back her head and laughed ecstatically.

"No, 'tain't!" she said; "ith thumpin littler 'n that. One more deth!"

"Well, what can it be?" said the mother, knitting her brows, as if in deep thought. "You said it had legs and wings, and it was alive; and it's not a turkey-gobbler. I guess it's a little chickie!"

"No, 'tain't," replied the child, shaking her head in great glee. "Dive it up?"

"Yes, I'll have to give it up. I'm sure I'd never guess it. Let me see."

The two heads bent lower yet above the chubby fist, and, while the child's face grew grave with absorbed attention, the mother's slender fingers gradually and cautiously unclosed the little hand, which, alas, was shown to be quite empty!

The child's countenance fell, and she raised her eyes in piteous disappointment.

"It wath a f'y," she said, ruefully, "and ith dot away."

"Was it a f'y, my precious?" the mother said, clasping the little creature to her breast with a motion of passionate tenderness, and rocking herself backward as she held her close and fast. "And mother guessed it was a turkey-gobbler or a little chickie! Poor mother couldn't guess a bit: could she? Never mind if it did get away. Mother will tell you a pretty story, to make up for it."

The child began to chatter, and struggled to release herself, but the mother held her close, until she had hurriedly pressed her handkerchief against her eyes, in which, even while she had been smiling, two tears had welled up. Then she re-seated the little one upon her knee and turned upon her a face as bright as ever, as she said,—

"What shall I tell about, baby? Must it be a new story or an old one?"

"A new toley. Tell about a 'ittle f'y," the child answered, settling herself complacently, as if accustomed to having her stories made to order in this way.

The mother was just about to begin, when, as she leaned backward in her seat, she caught sight of Gladys's dress amidst the vines of the porch, and the girl, finding herself discovered, stepped into full view. She was blushing painfully, but the heaviness and disquiet of her heart seemed to herself so sufficient an excuse for her strange conduct that she felt eager to justify herself, and, instead of retreating, she stepped through the window and entered the room, automatically reaching up to remove her veil in obedience to an instinct of frankness and openness.

When the veil was taken off and Gladys stood face to face with Mrs. Acland, who had put the child from her lap and risen to her feet, the look with which the girl found herself confronted put her conduct before her in its true light, for the first time. Mrs. Acland said nothing, but stood waiting for her visitor to explain her presence, and Gladys now realized that she had been guilty of an unpardonable breach of good breeding. She felt overwhelmed with embarrassment, which the absolute self-possession of the other woman served rather to increase. Mrs. Acland stood so erect and still, and, in spite of the fact that she wore only a pure-white freshly-washed morning gown, she looked so regal, that Gladys felt overawed and was totally unable to speak. The silence was becoming unbearable, when the child came to the rescue.

"Mother," she said, "ith the lady: that dave me yotheth."

"It was very kind of the lady," said Mrs. Acland, gently, but coldly, and then, influenced perhaps by the distressed look on Gladys's face, she added, more kindly, "Perhaps you have made some mistake."

Poor Gladys felt thrust back upon herself, in a way that hurt her

keenly. In general, people were so willing to comply with her wishes and give her her way that she hardly knew how to take this rebuff, gentle as it was. She began to think of going, but she shrank from the vision of herself hurrying back in shame and confusion along the way she had come, and she felt so helpless when she thought of the letter, and longed so for the blessed comfort of free speech with some one, while there seemed to be but one person in the world whom she could imagine herself talking freely to, and that one, though just at hand, she was being thrust away from. It seemed to her very cruel, and, in spite of her effort at repression, the tears came into her eyes.

Instantly Mrs. Acland's manner changed. She took the child's hand and led her to the door, telling her to run away to Mammy and not come back until she was called, and then, closing the door, she crossed the room swiftly toward Gladys, and said, in a voice of the kindest pity,—

"You are in trouble. Something distresses you, and you think I might help you. Perhaps I can." And, taking her hand in hers, she led her to a lounge, upon which Gladys sank, hiding her face in her handkerchief, with a strong effort to recover herself. Mrs. Acland sat down at her side, retaining one of her hands, and holding it in a firm pressure.

"Let me try to help you if I can," she said, presently, "but don't speak until you feel more quiet. I have plenty of time to wait."

She looked down at the hand she held, and saw that it was white and fine and adorned with splendid rings. She noted, too, the graceful contour of the youthful figure, and the elegance of the simple morning costume. How young and strong and prosperous this girl looked, and at the same time how tender! How was she to bear up under the heavy hand of inevitable sorrow, whose first pressure she was perhaps even now beginning to feel?

At such a time as this, women who have suffered feel a certain heart-uplifting in thankfulness for the power of sympathy which their own familiarity with sorrow has won them, and it seems worth while to have known the pain, to be able to tell others who stand quivering beneath its first incisive cuts that it can be borne, because it has been borne. And perhaps it is also at such times as these that the strongest gleams of comfort come to the souls long used to grief, in the form of a lightning-swift glance along the years to come, to a point—it may be very far away—where there is rest.

It was a clearer vision of this than had ever come to her before that made Mrs. Acland's voice strong, and sweet, and inspiring, as she said,—

"I shouldn't be glad that you had come, if I saw you happy and satisfied, but when I know you are sad and troubled I *am* glad, for I think perhaps I can tell you something to help you, and I would rather be able to help you than almost anything in the world. I wish I could show you how near to you I feel,—all in a moment. Just now, you were a stranger whom I felt almost indignant with, but now I feel so differently, and I believe if you went away from me now, without speaking, and I never saw you again, I should always think of you as a friend."

Gladys had recovered her self-possession, and now she turned her eyes steadily upon her companion.

"Don't think me thoughtless and cruel," she said, "for I know what your life has been, and I am not forgetful of it; but I long so to ask you a question."

She paused, and Mrs. Acland answered, quickly,—

"Ask it, without hesitation. I give you leave to ask me anything you like."

"Then tell me," said Gladys, impulsively, "tell me, in the light of all you have suffered, do you think love and marriage the best life for a woman?"

A swift flush suffused Mrs. Acland's face, but she did not flinch beneath the other's searching gaze. Some impetuous answer seemed to tremble on her lips, but she constrained herself to be silent a moment. Then she answered, seriously and simply, "Yes."

"And tell me this," pursued Gladys, with the same keen look and tone: "was there ever a time in your life when it would have been possible for you to marry a man whom you could not give your best and strongest love to?"

"I will have to look far back," said Mrs. Acland, "before I can be quite sure that I can answer that question accurately. There was once a time to which none of the impulses and motives of the life I live now have any application, and at that time I suppose such a thing as you have suggested might have been possible to me,—but only in this way,—only on the supposition of my being mistaken in my own feeling. I might have married a man I did not love, but I would only have done so under the impression that I did love him. Of that I cannot have the slightest doubt."

"But if you had begun by supposing, you might have gone on supposing," said Gladys; "and if you had never found out you didn't love him, that would have been all the same as loving him."

Mrs. Acland looked at her a moment, without speaking. Then she said, gravely,—

"You do not understand. You are utterly ignorant. I know just how ignorant and blind you are, for I was once as much so myself. You will only have to wait. Nothing can make it all clear to you but the reality."

"But how do people know that the reality—if you mean by that the truest love—will ever come to them?"

"People who are willing to give up that possibility, however remote, for a present certainty that is something less, would be very apt, I should think, to cut themselves off from the higher love."

"But many people, you must acknowledge, are incapable of the high and exalted feeling which answers to your idea of true love."

"Yes, I admit that of many—indeed, of most people."

"And suppose I, for one, am of that number?"

Mrs. Acland looked at her in silence for a moment, and then said,—

"I do not believe it of you."

"Do you think love and marriage the only happiness for a woman?" asked Gladys.

"No, I don't think that. I think a true marriage is the happiest lot, but not the only happy one; for I believe every useful life is, in one sense, a happy one. But I cannot judge for another. I can only thank God for the high and blessed estate to which it pleased Him to call me."

"How can you?" said Gladys, impetuously, looking at her with wonder-struck eyes. "When I think of a loneliness like yours, I seem to shrink from the very thought of love. No matter how perfect it may be, its outgrowth must be wretchedness and pain. How can you be glad of a thing that has yielded you such misery?"

"Because it has yielded me such joy!" said Mrs. Acland, fervidly,—*"a joy that outweighs the pain, oh, infinitely! I am lonely and sad, as you say, and so I am to continue all my life. I realize that, as you cannot possibly do; but I have my memory of the past, and my hope for the future, and I have my child! Suppose I had none of these: what would this loneliness be, compared to that?"*

"But suppose what you remember—suppose your child had never been. You would not then be conscious of any loss."

"No: if the highest aspirations I am capable of had never been awakened and ultimately realized, I might have been content to live my life out on a lower plane. Even in my bitterest sorrow I have been strengthened by the thought that now I could never breathe a lower atmosphere, and that the only step that it is possible for me to take now is the one that leads upward to heaven. That is the only change for me that would not be a positive lowering."

There was a moment's silence, which Gladys broke by saying,—

"You can't in the least understand what a relief and comfort it is to me to talk to you. I feel an impulse to pour out all my heart to you, and, if I did, I don't believe you would misinterpret me. But what, in truth, *are* you thinking of me? Do you imagine me a constitutionally garrulous, egotistical, undignified creature who pours her complaints into every ear that will attend to them, without any sense of reserve?"

"I imagine," returned her companion, smiling a little, "that you are a person almost unwisely self-contained and reticent. You appear to me like one drawing an unwonted breath of the freedom of self-expression."

"I think that is just the truth," said Gladys, looking at her in surprise. "How wonderful your insight must be!"

"If you would let me advise you," went on Mrs. Acland, "I should say, do not resist your inclination to speak to me with the utmost freedom. I feel as if I were going to be able to help you."

Gladys shook her head as if in doubt.

"You don't know what you may be undertaking," she said. "I am not what you may suppose me, perhaps, and I have such moods! Sometimes I should be hard even to you, perhaps, and miserably unsusceptible to your high appeals. Often I am persuaded in my mind that the best is too good for me, and am perilously near embracing a sort of life that you would think almost degrading. I am nearer to it now than you could believe."

"Perhaps not. I can believe a great deal of a young soul that has never known anything higher than its own instincts, and has never sought, or been blessed in finding, its noblest ideals outside of self. If you had been altogether capable of contentment on such a plane of living as you speak of, you would not have put down the cries of prudence and decorum which must have clamored against the eccentric step you have taken in forcing your way into my presence and taking me into your confidence."

"But I have not taken you into my confidence. I am only making up my mind whether I shall or not."

"You've confessed to me more than you know, perhaps, and, whether you ever choose to give facts and details or not, I feel that you have confided in me."

Gladys made no answer. She was thinking how extraordinary it was that her mood had changed so completely since she had begun to talk to Mrs. Acland. The anxiety and trouble she had felt on entering this house seemed to her absurd now, and she began to wonder that she had hesitated so over the answer to Mr. Locksly's letter. The glimpse that had been given her of Mrs. Acland's life had repelled rather than attracted her, and she felt that she wouldn't for all the world conform her own life to such ideas. She suddenly determined that she would write to Mr. Locksly to come, and it seemed to her extremely likely that the matter would go further. She hoped, indeed, that it might. It was very clear to her that the same laws and impulses were not for Mrs. Acland and herself.

At this point of her meditation she turned suddenly toward her companion, in whose eyes she met a look which caused her to say, impulsively,—

"Were you ever different from what you are now? I mean,—don't misunderstand me,—when you were a young girl, did you ever care for balls and amusements?"

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Acland, smiling; "it is natural for healthy young creatures to enjoy amusement, before life becomes too grave."

"Why should life necessarily become grave?" said Gladys. "I never can see why people insist on that,—at least while one is in health and without extraordinary afflictions. I want to choose the circumstances of my life so as to provide against the approach of this sadness you seem to think inevitable; and, unless I lose my health or meet with some other affliction which I cannot possibly foresee now, I don't see why I cannot do it."

"I did not say sadness was inevitable,—only that one soon outlives the gayety of youth, and the grave time of life comes: great happiness may bring that, as well as great sorrow. But human beings, after early youth, do not evidence a deep happiness by gayety. It is too solemn a thing."

"Solemn!" said Gladys. "That isn't the kind of happiness I want. I hate solemn things. I should like to be gay and light-hearted all the time."

"And are you so?" said Mrs. Acland, with a look that was a gentle reminder of the tears that had been shed within the hour.

"No," said Gladys, "I am not so now; but that is because I cannot make up my mind about things. I am afraid that in choosing my own destiny I might make a mistake. Once decided on certain important points, however, I mean to be happy; not solemnly so, but gayly so."

"Suppose you should choose wrongly?"

"That is the trouble. That is all my fear at present. When I was younger I used to say I would never marry; but I have changed; I have decided to marry."

Mrs. Acland had drawn a little apart from her, and no longer held her hand. Gladys felt that the sympathy which had been given to her former mood was withheld from this one, and she scarcely regretted it.

"I don't know whether to speak or to be silent," Mrs. Acland said. "It is unreasonable of me, I suppose, to feel hurt at the way you talk. Your ignorance ought to excuse you. But I must tell you a little how I feel. I would seem false to myself if I didn't." Her face grew paler, and her voice showed that she was deeply stirred. "Marriage—true marriage, as it was ordained by God—is the highest and holiest thing on earth,—a thing for a woman to live on her knees for,—a thing which if she misses, nothing remains for her but heaven; for there is no complete life on earth without it. I pray for my child every day that God may call her to this high estate, for the thought of life for her without it is terrible to me. And you talk about *deciding* it this way or that, as if it were a business engagement, instead of a thing too holy for the touch of any but God and the angels!"

Her voice had acquired an intense fervor as she went on, her face flushed, her bosom heaved. A wave of passionate emotion rushed over her, and she could say no more. She leaned forward in her seat, dropped her face in her hands, and remained for a few moments perfectly still, struggling to overcome this rush of feelings and to recover her calmness.

Gladys, for her part, was bewildered and almost terrified. She had never known anything like this before. The marriages that had come within her observation were either those made in Vanity Fair, and consequently endorsed by the world, or such as had been marked by an impetuosity and indecorum which she joined the world in condemning. But in this totally new view of the subject there was something that certainly fascinated her imagination at the same time that it repelled her reason. She was alarmed to find her sympathy engaged at all, for it was the kind of thing she would least have desired for herself. The few passionate attachments she had known of had generally come to ill, and these experiences had left on her a sense of violent action and reaction, which she construed as inevitable cause and effect.

Mrs. Acland's emotion seemed to have spent itself. She lowered her hands and sat upright, looking at Gladys with a face so calm and peaceful that the latter said, half involuntarily,—

"And you are not utterly miserable?"

"I would not change places with you," Mrs. Acland said, "for all the world could offer me."

"You don't understand my position, then. I've given you some false notion about myself by my absurd tears a while ago. If you think me unhappy, I assure you you are wrong. My life has been very pleasant, on the whole, as far as it has gone, and I intend it to be a great deal better in future. I have said I mean to marry, and I will see that the man I make choice of possesses the qualities that will insure me such surroundings as will secure my comfort and happiness."

There was an instant's pause before Mrs. Acland said,—

"I rather believed myself to be satisfied once, too, and trusted in my capability of arranging my life to suit my fancy, with a confidence not very far short of your own. But something came that took it all out of my hands and made me just helpless. I saw then that my way was marked out for me."

She spoke with an earnestness that disturbed her companion, whose strongest effort was now directed against that dangerous tendency to responsiveness which her will refused to sanction.

"Should you like me to tell you," said Gladys, gayly, "what are my requirements in my partner for life?"

"I should, very much," said Mrs. Acland, with an indulgent smile, such as she might have bestowed upon Con.

"As a matter of course," began Gladys, "he must be honorable, well-born, and intelligent. Then he must be a man who would never offend my taste in the smallest particular. Then it is imperative that he shall have a name I like. I thought seriously of accepting a man once because his name was Algernon Oranmore. It would have been a perennial comfort to address him as Algernon that would have compensated for the likelihood of my not having anything particular to say to him. Then he must be distinguished-looking: I don't make a point of absolute beauty. Then he must know the world and have accomplishments, and his manner and person must be scrupulously in accord with the strictest perfection of elegance and high civilization."

"You have omitted one point that I thought was always included by young ladies in making up their future happiness: I mean the tremendous wealth which the man must be possessed of."

"Oh, I don't specially care about that," said Gladys, rather hurriedly, "or rather I include that consideration in saying that he must not offend against my sense of good taste, for unless he had enough to provide suitably for himself and me, it would be the extreme of bad taste for him to request me to marry him."

"Is that all?" said Mrs. Acland, as she paused. "Your standard does not seem to me very difficult."

"On the contrary, I think my standard exceedingly high."

"And yet," said Mrs. Acland, "unless I am much mistaken, you have had in your mind, as you have spoken, an individual and not a class. Are you willing to tell me whether or not I am right in thinking you have had in view some one personally known to you?"

Gladys met her eyes with perfect steadiness, though the color in her cheek deepened, as she said,—

"Yes, you are right in that."

"And this man wants to marry you?"

"So he has given me reason to believe."

"And you are hesitating what to say?"

"I am; or rather I was. My mind is almost made up now."

Mrs. Acland rose and walked across the room, turning her back to her visitor and looking a moment through the open window. Her face was disturbed and perplexed. She seemed struggling with some strong impulse that she hesitated to obey. When she presently turned to her guest, however, her face had taken on a more determined look, and she reasserted herself by the girl.

"I must speak out to you," she said. "It may be useless, but I cannot help it. It would be wicked of me to keep back the knowledge that my own great love has given me. Oh, why won't people live up to their privileges? It seems such folly and madness to refuse to take the glorious destiny held out. My dear young girl, you are in terrible danger. You must not marry that man. Your feeling for him has not one quality of the essence of true love. You would be miserable; and you may be so happy! Oh, if you will believe the word of a woman who has known to the full the highest happiness that it is given to human beings to feel, you will not throw your glorious chance away. Let my experience—the sweetest words can tell—avail you something, at the opening of your young life. God must have led you to me, for I am one who can speak to you from the basis of a passionate reality, and I hope, through His blessing, to save you from a fate too terrible for me to bear to think of."

The intense power of her fervent personality moved Gladys to a reluctant sympathy with her emotion, and she felt herself borne onward by a current of strong feeling which she was powerless to resist. She did not want to possess such a passionate intensity of feeling as this woman had; she felt an instinct to flee from it as from a thing that would overtake and conquer her unless she hurried to escape.

"I must go," she said, rising hastily. "You have been very good to listen to me so long. Don't worry about me, please. I oughtn't to have troubled you. I shall do very well, and I am not capable of living on a plane with you. If I am content with very common food for my daily bread, because it is easy to procure and wholesome, don't whet my appetite for the exquisite delicacies which are for the privileged few, and which I have not the cultivation to enjoy. I must say good-by now. And, by the way, all this time I have not even told you who I am. My name is Gladys Montaveril. Have you ever heard it before?"

Mrs. Acland shook her head, at which her companion smiled.

"I am glad of it," she said. "There is nothing either very good or very interesting to hear, and you will probably find out soon enough what an inconvenient, vacillating, next-to-nobody I am, whom you may have more patience with if these qualities dawn upon you gradually instead of all at once. By which you will understand that you are to see more of me in the future, if you will be good enough to allow it."

"I hope to see more of you," Mrs. Acland answered, gravely, "and I shall trust to your remembering what I have said to you, when the important moment of decision comes. Oh, if you only saw it all as I

see it, you would understand how precious above everything the joy of a true marriage is. If you knew what I have suffered in the breaking of that bond, and yet how willing I am to take the pain, when I remember the joy past and to come! My husband used to quote so often, as the very soul of his belief and hope, that wonderful, beautiful line,—

‘If my bark sink, ’tis to another sea.’”

These were the last words of that strange interview, and they rang in Gladys’s ears insistently as she walked homeward.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Miss Montaveril, a few days later, ascended the steps of Mrs. Acland’s cottage for the second time, there was no faltering in her step, no hesitation in her bearing. She walked across the piazza with erect carriage and buoyant motions, and called out cheerily,—

“May I come in?” for the sound of voices had assured her that the mother and child were within the room.

Mrs. Acland was seated on a low chair, with Con on a footstool beside her, pointing out, to a rather reluctant student, the letters on a picture-card, and calling their names distinctly, while Con’s little piping treble repeated them rather listlessly.

As Gladys announced herself, both mother and child looked up with a smile of welcome; but Mrs. Acland was all in dense, deep black to-day, and looked paler and graver than she had looked before. She hurried to give her visitor a cordial welcome, however, and Con was told to put her lesson by until another time.

Gladys caught the little creature to her and perched her on her knee.

“Have you been well?” she said, turning to Mrs. Acland, with a touch of sympathy in her voice that showed she had observed the other’s pallor.

“Yes, thank you. I am hardly ever ill,” said Mrs. Acland, evasively. “And you? Have you been well and bright?”

“Oh, very,” said Gladys. “You know I made a resolution to that effect. You must not think me habitually as doleful as you have seen me. I was annoyed then by the necessity of deciding something, and that is always a tax on one’s energies. But that is over now, and I am a different being,—myself again, in fact.”

“You mean the point is decided?”

“To a certain extent.”

Mrs. Acland was silent a moment, and then she said, half hesitatingly,—

“Do you mean to tell me your decision?”

“I think not,” said Gladys, looking at Con all the while, and touching up with her finger-tips the fluffy locks of hair that hung over the child’s forehead. “You are so kind that you might give yourself some trouble about a thing that is not worth it,” she went on.

"That is my only reason for withholding my confidence, for it's a strange thing, but true, that the instant I come into your presence I feel prompted to confess. You stir that impulse in me the moment I look at you,—a thing no one else has ever done."

"If it is only to spare me that you are silent," said Mrs. Acland, "I beg you to speak. I am deeply interested in what you have told me about yourself, and I should like to know your decision."

"It doesn't amount to much, and commits me to nothing very definite," answered Gladys, still looking at Con, and following the outline of the latter's childish profile with her finger, from the curly locks on the forehead to the dimpled chin, with apparent absorption, an operation the child submitted to as willingly as a cat does to stroking. Mrs. Acland meanwhile was silent, and in a minute or two Gladys went on.

"I had a letter to write," she said, "and I was in doubt what to say."

"Was it to the person we were speaking of,—the man you described?"

Gladys's color deepened a very little, and she answered with a nod to the mother and a prolonged gaze at the child.

"I met him abroad a few months ago," she presently went on again, as if impelled almost against her will to speak out. "I thought perhaps he wouldn't persist, but he has; and you mustn't suppose I regret it. On the contrary, I am very glad, for I know no one that I think half so nice. His letter only said that he had come to New York, and that, if agreeable to me, he would come on here; and I hesitated for a while what to say. Of course if I told him to come, it would imply a good deal, and I really didn't know at first what I wanted to do; but I wrote finally."

"And told him to come?"

"I told him he might if he liked. It amounted to the same thing."

"You have decided, then, to accept him?" asked Mrs. Acland, quietly. How far from quiet she felt she did not care to show.

"I have decided to let him come, so that I may see how I like him on further consideration."

"You will hardly say no, after that."

"Hardly. I don't expect to say no; but I will if I choose to. I don't know what I may say. Con, what would you say if somebody asked you to go away and live with them always, and promised to be so good to you and take such care of you and let you do everything and have everything in the world that you wanted?"

"I would go—with mother," said Con, as if no other applicant would have a chance.

"And why with mother, darling?" said Mrs. Acland, bending lovingly toward her.

"Tauthe I love mother and mother lov'th me," said Con.

"That's my own precious baby!" said Mrs. Acland, lifting the child to her own lap and pressing her a moment to her heart. "Now, darling," she said the next moment, releasing her and reaching out for

the little white sun-bonnet that lay on the table near by, "you may run out and play awhile. Mother will call you when it is time for the lesson. Mammy is in the yard." She tied the bonnet under the child's chin and kissed her cheek, and Con was running off, when Gladys caught her hand.

"Come here, you hardened old reprobate," she said, peering into the bottom of the snowy sun-bonnet, where Con's rosy face, suggestive of abounding health and abundant soap and water, smiled back at her with a look that utterly cast in the shade Sir Joshua's representation of Innocence. "I like to be taken a little notice of, if I'm not mother. Give me a kiss."

When Con had complied, and subsequently vanished from sight, and the door was closed behind her, Mrs. Acland came to a seat by Gladys on the lounge, and said, gravely, as she assumed it,—

"Is this man strongly attached to you?"

Gladys lifted her eyebrows and made a little *moue*.

"Quite sufficiently so," she said. "If he were excessively so, I should not like it. My highest satisfaction in the contemplation of future intercourse with him is in the fact that he has a certain manner that assures me that he would always treat me with reserve and delicacy, which recommends him to me as nothing else could."

Mrs. Acland made no answer, and when Gladys looked at her she saw that her gaze was averted.

Against her will, the girl was caught into the strong current of this woman's passionate earnestness. Almost involuntarily she found herself saying, with an eager intensity,—

"Do you believe that love can come but once? Did you never know the feeling in a slight degree before it came in its completeness?"

It seemed to her watchful eyes that Mrs. Acland paled a little at this question, but she spoke quietly, after a short pause:

"I will try to answer the question you have asked me, though you have, without meaning it, laid your hand upon a wound which it seems to me will never heal. Oh, you do not know," she burst forth with a sudden fervor, "you can't imagine, when a woman gives her love to the man who has won the right to it, how she longs to be able to feel that he possesses every smallest atom there ever was of it! Not in quality only, but *all*, every fragment of feeling that was ever spent in any little way,—the endurance of the slightest hand-pressure, the acceptance of a flower which had been offered with any significance, the submission to the merest glance of fondness from another man, and, more than all, the entertainment of the possibility of another love."

She ceased speaking, and Gladys knew so little what to say that she dared not break the silence that hung between them for a time. Presently the other went on.

"It is all so long past and over now," she said, "but I cannot bear the memory of it yet. There was some one once for whom I entertained a decided feeling,—certainly not love: I soon learned to know with certainty that it was not that. It was something like what you have described as to having all your tastes and fancies satisfied. And the

hardest part of it is that he really cared for me. Not, I know, in the best way, and I trust not in a way to make him permanently unhappy in what followed. He had a passionate, almost desperate nature, hidden under a superficial guise of unusual coolness and repose. Disappointment he was wholly unaccustomed to, and the thwarting of his will went hard with him; but my thoughts about it all are full of selfishness, I fear. When I think of it, it is not to regret the pain he suffered, but to recall, with a self-reproof you cannot understand, the things I let him say to me that I never should have listened to except from one created being,—the hopes I let him have about me which only one man ought ever to have held."

"Did you give him any promise?" said Gladys, deeply interested. "Were you ever engaged to him?"

"Never!" said Constance, vehemently. "Never, I thank God! But I was like you. I was restless too, and I thought it might fill up my life to be married, and he was handsome and well-born and rich and attractive, and seemed devoted to me,—though I trust a part of that was seeming,—so I tried to make up my mind to marry him, and I let him know that I was trying. Oh, it simply terrifies me, even yet, to think what might have happened. Every one urged me to it, and I seemed drifting along with the stream."

"And what held you back, at last?" asked Gladys, eagerly.

Mrs. Acland was silent a moment, and then she said,—

"I met with my husband."

Gladys saw the effort it cost her to utter these words so calmly. It was the first time she had spoken of her husband directly, and she hoped that, now the effort had been made, it might be a relief to the overburdened heart. She wanted to manifest in some way the sympathy she felt, and, obeying a strong impulse that came to her, she put her arm around the other's waist and drew her nearer. The lovingness of the act, the tender feeling it expressed, were things to which the lonely widow had been long unaccustomed. She was too much moved for any effort at self-control, and, throwing her head down against her new friend's shoulder, she burst into violent sobs. Gladys drew her closer still, and bent to press her lips upon the soft smooth hair, gently stroking and patting the poor weak hands that lay prone and helpless on her lap, and gradually soothing her into returning calmness.

CHAPTER IV.

In the days that followed the interview just recorded, Miss Montaveril's time was filled to the last moment with engagements of every description. Accompanied by her step-mother, she went from one entertainment to another in rapid succession.

In a few days she found time, however, to go again to the little sequestered cottage which stood within a stone's throw of her house, but which she never crossed the threshold of without feeling that she had come all the way into another world. The very sight and smell

of the flowers that bordered the garden-walk leading up to the house—wall-flowers, cowslips, and such old-fashioned things—seemed to indicate a different atmosphere from the one she had just emerged from. Gladys took all this by way of warning, and tried to realize more earnestly the strong need there was that she should keep herself out of the dangerous drift which her former conversations with Mrs. Acland had taken. She was anxious, both for her new friend's sake and her own, to continue her intercourse, but she was, at the same time, resolved not to succumb to the serious influences in which she felt sure that friendship would involve her unless she steered her bark into a different current.

The more she thought over the lesson of Constance's love and life, the more did it stand out in strong colors as a warning to her to follow the beaten track in which thousands of men and women travelled through life without any unbearable grief; and if she could do this she was willing to forego the intoxicating happiness which, if it came, was liable at any moment to go out in horrible darkness and pain. Poor Constance! If she could have seen into the heart that she was striving to educate in the high mysteries of exalted love, she would have found it the more prone, by reason of her influence, to cling to the conventional limitations and worldly precedents which seemed to her such dust and ashes.

Gladys entered the room and approached her friend with an air of gayety. She was handsomely and even elaborately dressed, as she had been paying visits, and appeared, far more than Mrs. Acland had ever seen her, a fashionable young lady, her whole costume and bearing presenting a strong contrast to the widow's sad black robes and expression of subdued gravity. It was past the time for Con's lessons, and the child was not in the room.

Gladys had come on purpose to make to her new friend a communication which she would have felt it a breach of trust to withhold, and which she yet felt a strange reluctance to disclose. After a few days' interval, which Mr. Locksly had had the adroitness to allow to intervene between the receipt of Miss Montaveril's note and his response to it, he had now written to say that he would arrive in Eastmere to-morrow evening, and this Gladys felt she ought to tell her friend. But somehow the very presence of Constance made her a coward. She shrank from the protestations and entreaties that she could foresee, and she shrank also from wounding her friend. Of course, sooner or later, it must be done, but she would put off the evil moment as long as possible.

It happened that the evening fixed for the arrival of Mr. Locksly was one on which Miss Montaveril had engaged herself to be present at a grand fancy-dress ball to be given at one of the hotels. She had been just the least bit piqued at the delay of Mr. Locksly's answer to her letter, and it therefore suited her very well to write a note, to be given to the young gentleman on his arrival, conveying the information that a previous engagement would prevent her being at home to him that evening, and requesting him to meet her at the ball. She was not as yet entirely decided to marry him, and she found it therefore rather

agreeable than otherwise to meet and observe him first in a position which would preclude the possibility of confidential conversation.

"I am going to a grand ball to-morrow evening," she said, presently, breaking the pause that had followed the first greeting of the friends, "and I've been trying on my dress this morning. It's to be a fancy-dress ball, and my costume is quite a bewildering affair which I happened to see in Paris and bought on general principles, and now it comes in beautifully. It is really a lovely thing, and I am quite pleased with myself in it."

"What is it?" said Mrs. Acland, with interest. "What character are you going to take?"

Gladys did not answer at once. A happy thought had just struck her.

"Suppose I don't tell you?" she said. "Suppose I come and show myself after I am dressed? I really think you would admire the dress; and I know Con would think it as pretty as a Christmas-tree."

In this way she could put off the confidence she had to make until it was too late for remonstrance. The idea delighted her.

"Oh, I wish you would!" said Constance. "You sweet thing to think of it!"

Mrs. Acland was sincere in the interest she manifested in the thought of this young creature's innocent enjoyment of the ball, and at the same time she was anxious to show her appreciation of the other's friendliness in offering to go to this trouble for the sake of Con and herself. Gladys, for her part, felt a little reproached by her friend's gratitude, but she was too relieved to let the thought cause her more than a temporary annoyance. She went on, in a hurried manner, to speak of how taken up she had been in the last few days, and contrived to keep the conversation in such a channel as precluded the possibility of the grave talk she deprecated. She was conscious that it might perhaps be a disappointment to her friend, but it was wisest to prepare her for what was coming. So when Miss Montaveril presently remembered an engagement which she must hurry away to keep, and rose to take leave, she was able to feel that she had been completely successful in her efforts to keep the conversation within the limits she had set for it. And when she considered also the adroit way she had managed about making her communication to her friend, she congratulated herself upon a thoroughly satisfactory visit.

Miss Montaveril went to a dinner that evening, and returned home too late for any mental operations more strenuous than dreams; and so she had little time to think about the important arrival about to take place. She waked with the thought in her mind next morning, mingled with recollections of the evening past and anticipations of the evening to come. But the consciousness that she was approaching a crisis in her life was rather a burdensome one to her, and she found her thoughts continually recurring to Mrs. Acland's marriage and all the circumstances which had attended it,—a subject that had fascinated her interest as much as it had awakened her fears.

CHAPTER V.

CON was allowed to sit up that night in order to see Miss Montaveril in her costume for the fancy-dress ball, and great was the expectation in the usually quiet little cottage excited by this prospect. Mammy's animation, as usual, was concealed by a very calm exterior, but Constance's sweet face showed in some degree a reflection of the eagerness written in the child's as she would spring from her mother's lap at every sound and run to the window to look out. At last the sound of wheels was plainly audible, and they stopped before the cottage gate. In a moment more, a slender figure tripped lightly up the steps, followed by a trim little maid, who swiftly divested her mistress of her domino and mask, and Miss Montaveril, in all her splendor, stepped into the room.

The costume was certainly a marvellous achievement of French art, and its glittering ornamentations so delighted Con that she fairly danced with glee, but Constance, who looked rather at the face than the dress, was so transfixed by her friend's great fairness that for a moment she could not speak. Miss Montaveril was pale, but pallor in her was never an unlovely thing, and it suited better the costume she wore than the brightest of rose-tints could have done. From her little feet, encased in black stockings and silver slippers, to the line of her low forehead, where a diamond crescent sparkled, she was all vaporous black and gleaming silver. Her dress was of a fine diaphanous black texture, its transparent, billowy folds studded with scintillating stars and crescents. Her bare, white arms were covered with silver bangles, with here and there among them the flashing of diamonds. A black velvet band around her throat supported a succession of pendent stars and crescents in diamonds, and the fastening of her low corsage was one great diamond with a showery mass of points of light, that imitated a brilliant comet.

The girl's face was marvellously still and cold, and her eyes, those wonderful, star-like eyes, had more than usual that look as of a soul uplifted, although at this moment Gladys was nearer than she had ever been before to an act that would permanently bind her soul to earth.

"Oh, Gladys!" said Mrs. Acland, presently, her voice breaking in upon Con's raptures with a sort of far-off tone, "I can hardly describe how you look to me, but it isn't like a figure in a fancy-ball. You have the face of a nun."

"I have been told that before," said Miss Montaveril, simply, showing neither surprise nor disappointment at the strangeness of this comment. "I believe I could have better played that part. I ought to have worn a nun's costume to-night, instead of all these gewgaws."

"You look it, more or less, in every dress," said Constance. "I have thought it before, but it never came to me with such force. But what do you call yourself? Diana, I suppose? Both face and dress are suitable for that."

"I don't call myself at all," said Gladys. "There was a name tacked on to the costume, but I dislike the idea of going labelled. I

prefer to leave the point to the imagination. People may call me whatever they choose."

"I tall her Daddith," put in Con, with a complacent little grin. She had been frequently felicitated on this pronunciation by the owner of the name, and she took a certain degree of pride in it.

"Come and give Daddith a kiss, then, and wish her good luck to-night," said Miss Montaveril, stooping toward the child and looking into her innocent eyes half wistfully, and then, turning toward the mother, she drew her a little apart, and, putting her arms around her, she said, in a low but steady tone,—

"You must wish me good luck to-night, too, Mrs. Acland. The man I told you of has come, and will be at this ball. I have not seen him yet, but I wrote him to meet me there."

The effect of this announcement on Mrs. Acland was instantaneous and almost violent. The blood receded from her cheeks, a sort of terror came into her eyes, and she clutched her friend around the waist as if urged by an instinct to hold on to her.

"What are you going to say to him?" she asked, her voice positively shaking with emotion. "Oh, Gladys, don't refuse to listen to me! You have got a knife in your hand with which I see you tempted to take your own life. It will be a worse thing than any physical suicide could possibly be. I *must* try to hold you back. There will be no such thing as a return, when once you have taken the first step. You do not love, and therefore you must not commit yourself to a marriage with this man."

The passionate earnestness of her face, to which now a sudden blaze of color had come, the fire in her eyes, the strength of her firm grasp, the only half-suppressed emotion of her voice, agitated Gladys against her will. She was terrified at the power this woman had over her. Her one impulse was flight, for if she listened any longer to these siren tones this voice might draw her where she was determined not to go.

"Tell me what you mean to do," said Constance, slightly relaxing her hold, and beginning to show more fear than resolution in her face.

"I am simply going to do whatever the inspiration of the moment prompts," returned Gladys. "Don't distress yourself about me. You can't make me like yourself. It isn't in me."

The tones of her voice chilled her friend, and a shadow fell across her face as her hands relaxed their hold and Gladys moved away.

"You haven't wished me good luck, Con," she said, going over to the child, who had been amusing herself as well as Molly and Mammy by trying on the mask and domino. Con turned, as she always did in every moment of perplexity, to see what mother would say, and Mrs. Acland, lifting her into her arms, whispered softly in her ear,—

"Kiss her, darling, and say, 'God bless Gladys to-night.'"

The child at once turned to Miss Montaveril, and, putting her arms around her neck, kissed her, repeating her mother's words in a whisper. Gladys felt herself instantly touched, but she would not trust herself to speak. She only turned a moment to give Mrs. Acland a light kiss, and then, taking her scarlet domino from Molly, wrapped it about her and vanished into the darkness.

The maid followed her down the steps, and at the same moment Mammy left the room, and mother and child were alone.

"Oh, Con, Con," said Mrs. Acland, fervently, pressing the child close to her heart, and speaking to her in trembling, eager tones, "what would you think of anybody who stood before the open door of heaven and put out their hands and shut it and wouldn't go in?"

"I would do in," said Con, in a matter-of-fact tone, "and thee father."

"And take poor mother with you,—wouldn't you? Oh, Con, I want to see him so! It seems so long to wait!" said Constance, hiding her face against her child's bright hair.

Mindful of her ever-present care not to distress the little creature, Mrs. Acland quickly recovered herself, and reminded Con that it was long past bedtime, and led her off up-stairs, where Mammy was at work making the sweet still room all ready for the night. When the child's evening prayers, always beginning with "God bless father and mother," had been murmured at Constance's knee, and the little one kissed and tucked in her soft white bed, the mother was about to leave the room, when Mammy, with a look of some unwonted feeling on her face, delayed her on the threshold to say, in a low tone,—

"Miss Constance, I thought maybe I better tell you 'bout a thing I bin see to-day. I know you don't like no sounds en sights from out'n de worl', but seem like I better let you know 'bout dis."

"What is it, Mammy? Tell me, of course," said Constance, the weariness of her face relaxing only a little, and no special interest in Mammy's communication showing itself.

"Ez I was comin' 'long de street dis evenin'," said Mammy, "I come mos' face to face with Mr. Locksly."

"Mr. Locksly! Are you sure?" said Constance, in a tone of much surprise, not unmingled with a certain admixture of annoyance.

"Ef I hadn' bin mighty sure I'd 'a' hel' my tongue," said Mammy. "'Twarn' nobody 'tall but Mr. Reginal' Locksly hisself; though he got sorter fatter, en he look some older in de face."

"Well, it can't matter much to us, Mammy," said Constance: "only do be careful to get out of his way, if you see him coming any time, for he would probably remember you, and of course I'd rather he should not even know we are here. And do watch Con, when she is about the gate, and don't let her speak to strange people."

She said no more, and passed on down the steps, perturbed more than she cared to show by the knowledge that a man who had for a short while played a prominent part in her experience should be near her again, although she felt herself protected from the danger of meeting him. As she returned to the empty room so lately pervaded by her friend's presence, her anxieties about this evening's issue for Gladys came back upon her; but no sooner did this thought present itself than a swift mental suggestion connected it with the object of Mammy's communication. It was scarcely a moment before the possibility became a certainty in her mind, and the images her fancy conjured up in consequence were as painful as they were terrifying. There was no manner of doubt in her mind that the man who had once so strongly impressed

her own thoughts was the one in whom Gladys had described the very attributes which had once passed for attractions in her estimation also. The facts that Gladys had mentioned about him corresponded exactly with her own knowledge, and his having been for a long time living abroad confirmed her suspicion beyond the admission of a doubt. She began to pace the room excitedly, her memory active with the recollections of the influence this man's powerful personality had once exerted over herself. Memories which had slumbered so long that she had believed them dead arose in her; she lived through again the excited scenes of their intercourse, and recalled his passionate demand for a response to his strong feeling for her, which, although she could not give it, had by the man's very intensity and determination so wrought upon her that in her weakness and self-ignorance she had felt herself almost powerless to resist him, and she had always felt that, but for her having met with her husband just then, her appreciation of the man's personal charms, and the predominance of his strength over her weakness, would have perhaps forced her into a belief that she loved him and into the untold miseries which would then have followed. The throbbing of her heart almost suffocated her, as she thought of it, and her passionate relief in her own escape seemed to compel her to rescue her friend. True, Gladys was older and more worldly-wise than she had been at the time of her subjection to Reginald Locksly's influence, and the man's attitude toward the two women was different. Gladys had evidently known nothing of the passionate imperiousness of his strong will, but she might come to know it. Surveyed by the coolest judgment, he was a dangerously fascinating man, with a nature so masterful, a will so indomitable, that a weak, confused, discontented girl such as Gladys Montaveril was to-night would be but too prone to succumb to him, and once she yielded an inch, he would know how to take advantage of it. The insight given her by the wider experience of her recent years had convinced her that he was not a good man, but that his superficial polish and apparent refinement concealed a nature which she could believe to be both coarse and cruel. The image of Gladys's pure-eyed, nun-like face and delicate, girlish form seemed to rise up before her reproachfully, and the remembrance that she had no mother or dear relation to shield and save her, and, more than all, the thought of her husband,—of how a sacrifice like that would wound and shock his heart,—made her feel willing to go any length if but Gladys could be held back, for this night at least, from committing herself to this man. Once her word was pledged and the decisive step taken, the case would be wellnigh hopeless. But that could not have happened yet. A few precious moments remained; but how to make good use of them?

Impossible to send a message that would have the least chance of reaching her under her disguise of domino and mask; and what good would a message do, in the mood in which Gladys had left her? No, there was but one way. She must see her and speak to her, and compel her reluctant attention. But how could this be done? She pressed her hands against her head and thought intensely. Suddenly her face lighted up, as if with a flash of inspiration. She did not stop an instant to weigh considerations, but took up a light and swiftly crossed the

hall and mounted the stairs, and, passing the room where Mammy was nodding in her nightly watch beside Con's bed, she took her way to a small room where there were various trunks and boxes stored away. Opening one of these, she presently produced a dark, folded object, which on being shaken out proved to be a rather curiously-made black silk domino. It had a high, pointed hood, and peculiar long sleeves, and a black silk mask fell out of its folds. As Mrs. Acland hastily possessed herself of these articles and silently retook her way downstairs, a vivid remembrance of the last occasion on which she had worn these articles rushed over her. It had been at a fancy-dress ball where she was to meet Mr. Locksly, and she remembered now a little foolish act which it gave her a pang of shame to recall. Locksly had begged her to give him some token by which he might be able to identify her, and she had impulsively taken up a pair of scissors and snipped out of the back of her domino a little heart-shaped piece and sent it to him, and he had traced her by it at the ball. There was a flavor of coquetry and a degree of interest implied in the act that it galled her to remember now. She was too absorbed in her purpose, however, to give this trifle more than a passing attention, and, reflecting that the heart-shaped hole would be secure from notice by reason of the blackness of the garments underneath, she hastily put on the mask and domino, drew the hood over her head, and quietly crossed the threshold of her safe, secluded home and stepped forth into the darkness.

When she had closed the gate behind her, she paused a moment and stood still. Never a woman of any great physical courage, her long seclusion from the world and habits of strict retirement had lessened whatever stock of bravery she had once possessed. She would have to walk to and from the great hotel alone, and, worse than all, she would have to face its blaze of lights and mingle with its throngs of people without companionship or protection. In this moment of hesitation, her eyes, following her thoughts, turned upward. Suddenly she felt a sense of both protection and companionship. She seemed to realize that her husband saw and sanctioned what she did, and that God and His angels would support her in the trying duty she had undertaken to perform. Instantly her fears were quieted, and she passed swiftly on her way, unconscious of danger, heedless of the possibility of detection, and possessed entirely by the importance of the task she had in view. Keeping as much as possible in the shadow of the houses and trees, she made her way swiftly toward the great hotel, blazing with light, ringing with music, and thronged with merry people, masked and unmasked, who hurried hither and thither across the porches and halls. In this scene of confusion she was quickly lost, mingling in the great throng as only one masker the more. Her heart bounded with an excited pulsation that made her feel at the same time weak and strong. She had a sense of absolute isolation in the midst of this rushing throng, but the absorption of her purpose nerved her to overcome every obstacle that rose in the way of its fulfilment.

Eagerly scanning the figures that moved about, here and there, before her eyes, she felt at first almost hopeless of being able to distinguish among so many scarlet dominos the one she sought; but she

remembered that the peculiar fabric of which the domino was made had struck her, and she felt confident that this fact, together with the sort of individuality there was in Gladys's bearing, would enable her to identify her. She had observed, too, that the girl's satin mask which she had seen Con try on had a frill of silver lace; and these marks would be sufficient. Presently she found her way to a sheltered position in a window-recess, which afforded her better opportunity for observation, and from there she eagerly scanned the throngs of masked and dominoed figures that passed and repassed; but, although there were many scarlet dominos, none of them looked familiar to her. Suddenly she became aware that a tall masked figure had invaded her retreat and was speaking to her. A terror seized her, and she rushed away, mingling with the crowd, and, for the time being, escaping. Once or twice, as she moved through the room, alert and watchful, she was spoken to, but by turning a deaf ear and rapidly moving off she managed to free herself from these annoyances. Tired of her fruitless quest here, she now turned into a long corridor which led toward the dancing-room, whence the strains of a familiar waltz-tune fell upon her ear and touched a chord of memory that made her heart contract with pain. It carried her back to the time when she had danced with her husband by this tune, and been as gay and light-hearted as any creature here, and happier, she was sure, than any creature here could possibly be. That was in the days of their first acquaintance, and her mind glanced on to what came after, when the love between them had been perfected and they had dwelt apart together in a high world of their own, until he had left her, and she had come back to the dark valley of earth alone! Lost in these absorbing thoughts, bewildered by the soft, seductive waltz-strain, forgetful of the purpose that had brought her here, she was roused by the consciousness that a tall figure in a blue domino was walking very near her and apparently accommodating its motions to her own. She began to walk more rapidly, and the blue domino quickened its pace. Then she lingered, and the domino lingered too. Really alarmed, she began to look about her for the means of escape. Of course no harm could come to her, surrounded as she was, but she was in terror at the thought of being recognized, and her instinct of flight from this pursuer was so strong that, seeing the blue domino had gone a little ahead, she turned out of the stream of people and down a short narrow passage that led to a dimly-lighted room, the door of which stood partly open. Without pausing to think what she was doing, Constance darted down the passage and into this room, and, glancing around, she found herself in a sort of housemaid's closet, with brooms and brushes and wooden pails ranged around the walls in neat order, only dimly discernible by the lowered gas-jet. Recovering herself and realizing what an unauthorized trespasser she was, she turned to retrace her steps, when suddenly she heard a soft foot-fall, and at the same moment the door was closed, not, however, before she had recognized a tall figure in a dark-blue domino, outlined against the brilliant light behind. Terrified and trembling, she shrank back to the extreme limit of the small room, and stood, breathless with suspense, against the wall. The draped figure now leaned forward to

the gas-jet, and turned the light on full. Then, placing himself with his back to the door, he said distinctly, though his tones were low and guarded,—

"I ask your pardon if I have made a mistake in thinking you are some one I know well, and whom I cannot run the risk of losing sight of. If I am wrong, and you will satisfy me of it, I will leave you at once, with no further justification of my strange conduct than the statement I have just made. I will not mention the name of the woman I take you to be, because it is possible I am mistaken, but perhaps you will tell me if you recognize me."

He put up his hand, threw back the hood of his domino, and took off his mask. As these disguises were removed, Constance, who had felt her blood grow cold at the first sound of his voice, uttered a little cry and covered her masked face with her hands. Eagerly, scrutinizingly, the man's eyes fastened on those little trembling hands, and a look of satisfaction crossed his face, as if he recognized them. He clasped his own hands fervently and drew in his breath in a strong, deep sigh.

"Constance! Constance Leigh!" he said, in a voice whose lowered tone could not conceal its passionate triumphantness. "The light of youth and joy comes back again the moment I feel your nearness. How you have come across my path a second time, I do not ask. I loved you once and gave you up. I wandered far away to the ends of the earth, where civilization's echoes even could not reach, and when I came back to the world again I did not even ask about you. I thought I had conquered that weakness; but it proves itself too much for me. It is *not* weakness. It is the strength of my life. No one, nothing, has ever taken your place with me. It is my fate to love you; and it must be your fate too. What else has given you back to me, in this strange way, just when I had made up my mind to adopt the humdrum existence that other men live, and get what I could out of life, by going on in a decent, respectable way, and doing without love?—for love has had no existence for me apart from you."

All the time he was speaking the woman crouched against the wall, still as a statue, save for a little agitating tremor, whose significance he could not guess, which now and then ran through her. He knew the singularly-shaped black domino, and had recognized its wearer's walk and carriage before he had had the evidence of those fair little slender hands, which could belong to one woman only in the world. Still, it was as well to prove the matter, since the means of proof were at hand.

"I know you, Constance Leigh," he said, controlling his voice into a calmer tone, as he took a step toward her, "and, in order that you may know that I know you, I can show you in the back of the domino you wear a little mark which we both remember. I know it is there, though years have passed since I have seen it."

The figure crouched against the wall was motionless still, but now as she felt a hand—gently and respectfully enough—laid on her, as the man leaned forward and caught the folds of her garment, she sprang away from him, as if a viper had stung her. But the hand that held

her retained its grasp, and the eager eyes had found the mark they sought. As Constance too caught sight of it and felt herself still held by that unbearable grasp, she tore the long garment from her, leaving it in his hands, and with the same impulse of freedom she wrenched the mask from her face and stood erect before him, palpitating, pale, defiant, in her piteous widow's weeds.

If it had been possible to mistake the meaning of those sad black garments, that pallid, care-worn, grief-marked face was enough to tell the story. The knowledge that might in another case have given cause for hope and exultation came to this man now accompanied by a meaning in the woman's eyes that struck a deadly blow to passion and showed him, at a glance, the great chasm that opened between this woman who stood three paces from him and himself. He turned his eyes away from her. The face he saw was Constance Acland's, sad, grief-stricken, pale,—not the rosy, happy, youthful face of Constance Leigh. He saw that, after all, he was mistaken.

All this time he had kept his position between his prisoner and the door, but now he moved aside.

"I will detain you no longer," he said. "You are at liberty to go."

"Not until you have gone before me," she said, holding herself erect and looking at him with a glance of fearless scorn. "I would not take a step toward you, even to escape from the cowardly imprisonment you have enforced upon me. I suppose release will come in time from some quarter, and I would rather wait for it than make any appeal to a man who has been so deaf to the appeal of a woman's helplessness."

The man attempted no response. He was willing enough to escape from a scene that galled him to the core. He took up the mask that had fallen from his hand, put it on, drew the hood of his domino over his head, and left the room. The instant Constance found herself alone, she hurriedly restored her mask and domino also, and then, pausing a moment to collect her confused senses, she tried to resolve on what her next step should be. She had not yet seen Gladys, and the necessity for doing so was stronger now than ever, and yet she felt too utterly prostrated and wretched to make the effort. Her longing was to escape from this scene of tumult and excitement and fly to her own little quiet home, where Con and Mammy were, with Arthur's grave near by. Oh, if she could only get a word with Gladys first, and then fly off to that safe refuge! But how could this be done?

A few moments later, safe behind her disguise, she was mingling in that rushing throng again. It seemed an age since she had left it, and yet how few the moments had been, in reality! The band in the ball-room was playing the same waltz. The sound of it sickened her. The memories it brought back were more than she could bear. She turned away from the sound, into a long corridor which she hoped might lead out of the hotel and into the silent night. She felt almost powerless to continue her quest longer. But it happened that on this corridor there were some private parlors and apartments occupied by some of the guests of the hotel, and just emerging from one of these

Constance caught sight of a scarlet domino and recognized the figure she had so long been in search of. She drew back a moment, behind a curtained window, and waited. The parlor was occupied, at present, by a white-haired old lady, who stood in the background smiling and bidding adieu to three visitors who had evidently turned aside from the crowded ball-room to pay her a visit. Two of these visitors were tall young officers in splendid military uniforms, who had evidently come to the ball in their proper persons, as there were no signs of mask or domino about them. The third was Gladys, who had removed her disguises for a time, probably to show herself in all her black and silver splendor to the old lady. She was now about to reassume them, and as she stood in the brilliant light just within the door-way, the magnificent young officers on either side of her, the group made a charming picture. One of the young men carried her mask, bouquet, and fan, while the other held behind her the scarlet domino which she was reaching back to receive upon her shoulders. Her face was turned aside to answer some remark the old lady had made, and the eyes of both young men were fixed upon her with just the looks of reverential regard that the sight of a beautiful young girl like this ought to inspire. Each had the air of being sensibly honored by the service they were rendering, and Gladys, with her Diana's crescent on her brow, seemed created to accord favors and accept homage.

When the scarlet domino had been fastened on, and the silver-bordered mask restored, the two young men turned to take leave of the old lady, and Gladys stepped out into the hall. Constance saw her chance. Gliding from her place, she came close to the red domino, and whispered hastily in her ear,—

“Avoid seeing Mr. Locksly alone to-night. Don't commit yourself to anything. You will know why to-morrow.”

She had no time for more. The young officers were approaching, and so, swiftly turning down the first passage-way she saw, she made her way somehow, by what means she never could remember, out into the star-lit night. She knew little of how she reached home, or whether she met any one or not. The first full consciousness that came to her was when she found herself alone in her own little quiet home, in the room where she and Arthur used to sit together in the days when she was happy in the love and safe in the protection of her husband. Here was the sofa they had sat upon hour after hour, hand in hand, and talked of their inalienable union, which death should be as powerless as life to break. And where was Arthur now? He *had* been once! His picture, that bore witness to his having lived in palpable, visible form, was in its little worn case, in her pocket. His grave, which held his very body, was yonder on the hill. His living child, that had derived her life from him and looked at her with Arthur's eyes and smiled at her with Arthur's smile, was asleep in her little white bed up-stairs; and Arthur was dead, dead, dead! What that meant she knew not. She only knew that it was true. Arthur's love, the most *living* thing that ever was,—that had made all other human feeling seem dead to her,—was dead now too. Arthur's spirit, that had promised to watch over and be with her forever, must be dead too,

or why had it not burst its bonds and come to her to save her from the mortal insult she had suffered to-night, when a man whose presence was pollution to her had dared to speak such words to Arthur's wife? Oh, it was hard to believe that if her husband lived, in any distant sphere of heaven, he could have kept away from her then. No, Arthur was dead. His dear strong arms that were once all-powerful to protect and to avenge her were folded over his breast, under the earth up yonder, in the spot to which she carried flowers, and Arthur's soul must be as dead as Arthur's body! A sense of awful loneliness swept over her, such as she had never felt before, and she lay there prone upon the lounge, quivering with agony. She felt herself forsaken. She believed she was alone. God and heaven seemed far beyond her grasp; the path ahead looked as hopeless to her as that behind.

It was not for very long that she was left to grovel in this place of outer darkness. After a while the cloud, she knew not how, was lifted. She remembered Con, and was thankful for her. She remembered David and Mammy and the human love that still remained to her. Gradually the fact penetrated her consciousness that Mammy might wonder at her absence and come to look for her. She was utterly ignorant of how long she had been away, but the importance of concealment came over her strongly. She had very few secrets from Mammy, but no one must know of this night's experience, unless it should be necessary to tell Gladys, and that she hoped might be avoided. She was certain her whispered words could not have betrayed her, and she trusted that, in some way, she might never be forced to undergo the pain of confessing the events of this night to any one.

She rose from the lounge, and stood up, drawing in her breath with a long and labored inspiration and breathing it forth again in a fervent "God help me," which was an offering of a renewed heart and a re-kindled faith in God, in heaven, and in Arthur's still living love. Rolling the domino and mask together, she went softly up the stairs and restored them to the trunk from which they had been taken. Then she went to her quiet chamber, where Con was sleeping peacefully, with faithful Mammy nodding at her side. Constance bent an instant above her sleeping child, and then turned her gentle gaze upon the old negress in her big chair, her turbaned head dropping forward now and then with the restless jerks that always accentuated Mammy's evening naps. The numbness in the poor young widow's heart was thawing fast beneath the sweet influences of human feeling, and she felt a sudden sense of restoration to the presence of God and His good angels, and of Arthur, wherever the safe secure place might be in which he waited for her.

She laid her hand softly on the old woman's shoulder.

"Mammy," she said, "do go to bed. Dear old Mammy, you must be so sleepy. You good, good Mammy, what would Con and I do without you? Surely God is very good to give you to us."

And so it came to pass that, after all the bitterness and darkness of this night, Constance found a sense of peace and went to her night's rest with a quiet, trusting heart.

CHAPTER VI.

MRS. ACLAND was a little earlier than usual at her husband's grave next morning, and the prayer she uttered, as she fell on her knees beside it, was as fervent as it was brief. She did not feel inclined to linger here, for she had something to do for Arthur this morning,—something that she could hear the voice from that dear grave crying out to her to do, and do quickly. She kissed his name on the cold stone, but felt no chill from the contact, as she had often done before. Arthur seemed nearer and living while Arthur's spirit was animating her as it did now.

On leaving the grave-yard she walked rapidly to Miss Montaveril's house, mounted the steps with a resolute bearing, sent for Molly, and had herself announced to her young lady. Molly, obeying her orders, went to Gladys and waked her from a sound sleep, to say that Mrs. Acland would like to speak to her at once.

In a few minutes Constance was summoned, and, passing up the grand staircase and across a great upper hall, she saw Gladys, standing on the threshold of a blue-draped boudoir, clad in a soft dressing-gown of pale rose-color, with a silver-backed brush in her hand, with which she was brushing out the thick masses of her wavy hair. She turned her sweet face, fresh from its cold bath, to Constance to kiss, and then, throwing an arm around her, led her into the sumptuous little room, with its rich hangings of silk and lace, its exquisite china, dainty pictures, luxurious furniture, and numberless charming effects of color and form. As they crossed the room thus, Constance caught sight of herself and her surroundings in a large mirror, and exclaimed, half involuntarily,—

"I look like a great ink-spot on a fair page,—don't I?" And indeed her heavy black dress and dense crape veil made a strange contrast to the things about her.

Gladys's answer was to put both pink-clad arms around the sad black figure and draw it close against her heart, and as she felt herself held thus Mrs. Acland spoke, in a voice low with feeling.

"Gladys," she said, "I have something very important to say to you."

"Don't be solemn, please, dear," said Gladys, drawing her down on a deep-blue divan, "and don't make me solemn. I don't want to be. You mustn't expect me to take myself seriously. I couldn't if I would, and indeed, dear, I wouldn't if I could."

Mrs. Acland was silent, looking away from the girl at her side. She wanted a moment to think. She had decided, before coming here, to say nothing to Gladys about her last evening's experience, because she found it almost impossible to rehearse a scene that had cut so deep into her most sacred consciousness, and also because she shrank from wounding the womanly pride of her friend by revealing, without absolute necessity, the full measure of the falseness of the man who pretended to be her lover.

Presently she turned, and, taking both the young girl's hands in hers, she looked searchingly into her eyes and said,—

"I am not going to ask you questions, for I see you are not in the mood to answer me seriously. I am merely going to state to you certain facts. In the first place, the man you expected to meet at the ball last night, and whom you are thinking of marrying, is Reginald Locksly."

A look of amazement, followed by a swift flush, assured her this was true, but she did not pause appreciably before going on.

"In the next place, Gladys," she said, "Reginald Locksly is the man I have told you of, who once occupied the place of a possible future husband to me also, and the utter thankfulness I feel at having been saved from a fate so terrible compels me to the strongest effort I am capable of to rescue you. He is not a good man, Gladys. I know what I am saying when I tell you he is incapable of a high and unselfish affection. He is overbearing, unscrupulous, false-hearted,—and worse. In spite of his exterior polish, he is both coarse and cruel. I should say to any woman in the world that she had better choose death a thousand times than the life that would be hers in the close and irrevocable bond of marriage with such a man; but when it is *you*—my friend, my sweet, pure, delicate, tender Gladys—whom this danger threatens, I feel that I would dare anything to hold you back from such a fate."

Gladys drew herself upright, and, meeting her friend's eyes steadily, said, in a firm voice,—

"I know you mean me nothing but kindness and tenderness by what you are doing, but I believe you are mistaken. If the Reginald Locksly you knew years ago was a bad and untrustworthy man, then he is not the Reginald Locksly I know now. As to your doing me a favor by preventing this marriage, there you are mistaken too. If my further knowledge of him confirms my opinion and disproves yours,—which of course is a point to be definitely settled before I give him any promise,—that much you have accomplished, your warning has made me more cautious,—why, then I intend to marry him. I *want* to marry him!" she exclaimed, abruptly. "I want to escape from this hideous commonplace life with my step-mother, who often drives me to the verge of madness with her stupidity and frivolity. It may be simply a marriage of convenience. Well, I don't deny it. Everybody expects me to make a marriage of convenience. It is the custom with girls of my station in life."

"Then let it be a custom honored in the breach instead of the observance!" exclaimed Constance, fervently. "Oh, Gladys, *you* have something in you too high for this."

"Bless your dear, loving heart!" said Gladys, looking at her with a warm affection in her eyes, "I have never had any one to care for me in this way before, and I suppose that is what makes me feel that you are more my friend than all the friends I ever had before put together. But don't expect too much of me: you'll be disappointed if you do. Don't—excuse the homely phrase—try to get blood out of a turnip. I really haven't in me the fine feelings you are always trying to extract, and you might squeeze and punch and puncture forever, and you'd get nothing better than turnip-juice at last. It seems to me my reasons for

wishing to marry Mr. Locksly are admirable: but there is one, and that a very important one, which heretofore I have not mentioned to you. Mr. Locksly is rich, which may seem to you perhaps a very low consideration, but——”

“Not at all,” said Constance, interrupting her; “or rather it seems to me exactly on a level with the other reasons you have given,—neither higher nor lower.”

Gladys colored, and a momentary glimmer of resentment flashed from her eyes, but she controlled the feeling and went on quietly:

“You have not heard me out. I am quite above such a thing as marrying for money, in the ordinary meaning of the phrase, but, having myself a large fortune, I have been continually troubled by the fear that I should be sought after for that, instead of for myself. I am sure some of the men who have wanted to marry me have been influenced by this, and I have suspected others of it, possibly without reason. But with Mr. Locksly that consideration doesn’t enter into the question, as he has money enough to be beyond the reach of such an influence.”

“I exceedingly doubt that, but it would do no good to argue the point. Tell me this: did you see Mr. Locksly last night?”

“No; I don’t think he was there. I am expecting a call from him this morning. Oh, if I *can* make up my mind to marry him I shall be so thankful. - I *have* to endure the present conditions until I am married. I assure you that form of words ‘until I am married’ throws a borrowed lustre around the event itself. It means, to me, escape from my present almost intolerable environment. Don’t think anything unkind of Eloise; she means as well as a human being could, but she jars upon every nerve I possess. I suppose you can form no idea of what an intercourse like that is.”

“Yes, I can,” said Constance, suddenly. Her tone had grown sweet and her face tender, from some inward prompting of the heart. “I can fancy what it is, by looking on the reverse of the picture,—by glancing backward over those years in my own experience in which each day was passed in a companionship that had for every moment the supply for every moment’s need,—that was day and night, summer and winter, my inspiration, my support, and my joy,—that answered every longing of my heart, the small no less than the great,—that felt for all my sorrows, whether they were great bereavements or petty vexations,—that held continually before my gaze my highest, truest self and made it seem worth any pain and trial to struggle after and attain to it,—that created a high atmosphere, in which whatever was base in me could not live, and yet, in dying, changed its form and passed into new impulses of hope and faith,—that could rejoice as adequately in my joy as it could grieve in my distress,—that was just one long sweet dream of happiness and peace and safety, enlarging my heart so much, at times, that it saw and felt heaven itself, and seemed strong enough to endure *all* that God could send of sorrow and pain, because there always remained at the end the prospect of an eternity of such companionship in heaven.”

Her rapt face and trembling tones had shown a continually increasing emotion as she spoke, and when she ended, her voice was hoarse

with tears. Gladys had followed her with an intense interest, which now betrayed itself in eager words.

"Heaven! God! Eternity!" she said. "I cannot take hold upon those things. I sometimes try, but the effort comes to nothing. It never seems a reality to me that I have the possibility of one day entering a place which I can form no higher estimate of than to picture it as unlike to this world I live in now as any place can be,—a place where every condition of existence will be so changed that we ourselves will need to become other selves to live in it. That indeed would be a joyful thought, for I am as sick of myself as I am of this disappointing world I live in!"

"Oh, how different from the thought of heaven that I have had!" said Constance, her sweet face aglow, her soft voice thrilling with feeling. "Often in the past, when Arthur and I have sat together by the fireside of our little home, our hands clasped close, our darling child asleep near by,—how often have I feared that heaven would not be enough like earth,—that the conditions of life for the redeemed and pardoned would resemble too little those of poor struggling humanity on earth, which, in spite of all the pain and struggle, is yet capable of such supreme blessedness and delight! I told Arthur about this feeling once, half timidly, because his thoughts about these things were always very high, but he did not rebuke me. He said it was a very human feeling, and that our human natures were from God, and He would surely allow for their weaknesses. I remember he said, too, that it was hardly possible but that we should rate higher than the assurance of absolute bliss our own conception of bliss. Our conception of bliss,—his and mine,—he said, was an eternity of the companionship of each other and our child, in the presence of God and the angels, with all sin and sorrow and fear of parting forever banished. This, he said, was, by the very conditions of our creation, more precious to us than simply to know that we would be supremely happy, without knowing what the conditions of our happiness would be. He believed God meant us to look forward to the perpetuation in eternity of the purest and most elevating joys we had known on earth."

"Oh, Mrs. Acland," cried Gladys, as she paused, "it will give you pain to hear it, but I can't help telling you that I wouldn't for all the world have your experience. I believe in your joy, dear, I believe in the beautiful happiness you have described to me, but the more I realize it the more do I desire for myself a different fate. I would not love as you have loved, or be loved as you have been loved, for all the transient, fleeting joy a human heart could hold. It would be no joy to me—only pain—to live a life like that, knowing that the end must come. It is too terrible a thought to contemplate."

"Does it seem terrible in me?" said Constance, her face illumined with a radiant light. "Do I seem wretched and miserable and hopeless? I declare to you it is not so. If at times I do feel sad and despondent, and weary of the long, long waiting, let me take the blame for it and own the truth,—that it is because I am miserably false to the high faith I learned from the blessed one God gave me to be my companion awhile, until he had shown me the way to Him,—whose

faith was so strong and availing that he closed his dear eyes on his wife and child forever, for this world, with a perfect resignation to the sweet will of God, whom he trusted to restore them to him for eternity. Oh, don't, I beg you, Gladys, be misled by my weak faith. I want you to understand that I am a wretched, feeble exponent of an all-powerful and availing faith that is strong enough to bid defiance to the grave. Arthur could have shown you this and made you take hold of it. I believe he could have made you comprehend what a true Christian marriage is, in a way that would have made it impossible for any other to satisfy you. He would have longed as ardently as I do, to make the attempt, and he would have succeeded where I have failed!"

The tears rose to her eyes and choked her voice as she ended and got up, as if to go. Gladys stood up too, and put her arms around her friend and drew her nearer, with a motion full of affection.

"Don't say you have failed, my dear, good friend," she said. "I do see how beautiful it is. You have not failed in your effort to show me that. But I have not your strong faith, and neither have I your high nature. These things are not for every one."

"Ah, how often Arthur used to say that!—that the higher mysteries were revealed to the few! He thought that he and I were bound to give thanks for a peculiar blessing in our marriage. I do wonder," she went on, with a new impulsiveness in her voice, "if he would feel as I have done from the first, that you were set apart for this high destiny. I never had the feeling about but one other person, and I will not believe I can be mistaken.

"I must leave you now," she added. "I will exact no promise from you, but I leave you the memory of what we have talked about to think upon, and I ask you, Gladys, in the name of the love I bear you, and in the name of the mother who once yearned over the thought of your future as I now yearn over Con's,—the mother who may be watching every step of your way from heaven,—and, more than all, I ask you in the name of the highest that is in you, to give me your confidence in this present juncture of your life, and to commit yourself to nothing without telling me. Do not refuse me this, dear Gladys."

She had spoken with intense earnestness, and she now paused almost breathlessly for a reply.

"I promise you with all my heart," said Gladys, "and you must never doubt that I thank you heartily for coming to me now. I know it cost you something to do it."

"It cost me nothing," said Constance, "or at least I did not stop to count the cost. It would have been much harder to stay away. I shall be incessantly thinking of you until I see you again, and if you have an interview with—the person we have spoken of, let me know as soon as possible what occurred. You will do this, will you not?"

Gladys willingly gave the promise, and Mrs. Acland went on:

"What I most desire is that you shall yourself perceive, by the light within your own soul, the absolute unworthiness of this man. I could prove to you, if I chose, that my estimate of him is a true one,

but I would far rather you should see it for yourself. It belongs to my feeling about you that the nobility of your own nature must reject a thing so utterly beneath your acceptance as a pretence of love like that. If I see you in danger I shall tell you all I know, but at present I feel a wonderful confidence in leaving you to your own best instincts and insight. I do feel that the eyes of your soul have been opened, to some extent, by the things I have been able to reveal to you ever so imperfectly. They never can be perfectly revealed except by one thing only, and that is——”

“Oh, I know,” broke in Gladys: “to fall in love! But I don’t want to fall in love, and I don’t mean to.”

“What you want, what you mean, your small desires and weak intentions, will matter little when the supreme moment of your life shall come; and come it will! Remember what I say. You would have Love to be your slave, advancing or retreating at your bidding, but it is not so that he will come. Love is master; he makes his own terms, and you cannot choose but obey.”

She bent to kiss her friend, and was turning away, when a sudden thought arrested her, and she paused to say,—

“There is one thing I have forgotten. In case the interview we expect takes place to-day, you must on no account mention that you know me, or allude to me in any way whatever. It would be most painful to me. If, by any chance, my name is mentioned, now, or in the future, I trust you to betray no consciousness concerning me. It is a remote contingency, but I could not be content without this promise from you.”

The promise, of course, was immediately given, and in another moment Mrs. Acland had drawn her veil over her face and moved off down the staircase.

She walked homeward preoccupied and thoughtful, but not, on the whole, dissatisfied. She knew her friend had been strongly moved, and she felt certain that, let her try as she might to thrust from her the impressions of that morning’s talk, she would not be successful. She cast a swift glance upward to the far-off, clear blue heavens, as she had a way of doing when she was thinking in any special way of her husband. It was a kind of silent appeal to his approval and protection, and she always felt as if he saw and understood it.

CHAPTER VII.

AT as early an hour as it was permissible to call upon a young lady who had been up late at a ball the night before, Mr. Locksly betook himself to Miss Montaveril’s cottage and sent up his card.

The scene with Mrs. Acland last night had been followed by a strong reaction, and he was, in consequence of that scene, more anxious than he had ever been before to come to an understanding with Miss Montaveril and have the point settled that she was to marry him. No living man, however vain and self-confident, could have cherished for a

moment the belief that he could possibly make himself acceptable to a woman who had looked at him as Mrs. Acland had looked last night, and when once he was fully convinced that he could never be anything but an object of scorn to this woman, who, of all the women he had ever met, had fired his emotion and excited his feelings most, his impulse was to stifle every recollection of her as promptly and effectually as it could be done. And a speedy marriage with Miss Montaveril suggested the promptest and most effectual means of doing this. In the reaction of cold anger that had come over him as he retired to his room in the hotel, directly after leaving Mrs. Acland, he distinctly thanked his stars that this woman maintained still a power of resisting him such as he had never before met with in any woman he had set his mind on pleasing. The explanation of this self-gratulation lay in the fact that he knew Mrs. Acland to be poor, in his sense of that elastic term, and the fortune of the woman he should marry was not now the matter of indifference to him that it had been when he first knew Constance and wanted to marry her, or that the woman he wanted to marry now supposed it to be. The reckless expenditures of recent years had made a deep inroad into his once considerable fortune, a fact he was keenly anxious to conceal, and the means of concealing which lay, as he believed, just within his grasp. What a piece of boyish folly, then, would it not have been to let this golden opportunity, with all its agreeable accompaniments, such as immediate worldly advancement, and feeling himself envied by every man he knew, slip from his fingers for the sake of gratifying a mere whim for a woman who, for some absolutely inexplicable reason, possessed the power to enthrall his senses and kindle his emotion such as no one else had ever had! That woman, moreover, as he reflected now, was the Hebe-like, blooming, youthful Constance Leigh, and not the pale, saddened, careworn, if still lovely, creature who had suddenly revealed to his expectant eyes, that had forgotten to allow for the changes of those full-fraught years, the far different face of Constance Acland. The ravages of time and sorrow on that sensitive impressionable face had done almost as much to bring him to his senses as the repellent anger of her austere eyes.

Well, whatever the means had been, he had quite recovered himself, and it was with a very business-like and wary air that he set himself, the morning after the ball, to glean such particulars as he could of Mrs. Acland's manner of life at Eastmere. The story, as it was currently known, was told to him by an old acquaintance, a sort of professional watering-place gossip, whose revelations had the satisfactory effect of completely reassuring him on the score of any possible meeting with Mrs. Acland, and his own consciousness convinced him that there was no danger that the particulars of the encounter at the ball would ever pass her lips. How she had happened to be there was, of course, a mystery, but he knew from the character of the costume that had been revealed when her domino was removed that some special errand had brought her, which it had been her purpose to discharge before the time for unmasking should come. This, for the present, was all that he could gather, and it was enough for his purposes. He was heartily ashamed of the puerile weakness that had carried him

such lengths last night, and commensurately pleased that no one was likely to know what an absolute fool he had been.

Miss Montaveril was in the morning-room with her step-mother when Mr. Locksly's card was brought in. She betrayed no emotion as she took it, and, after glancing her eye over it, turned it to the elder lady, saying, quietly,—

"Will you come with me into the drawing-room?"

"No; I'm busy with the papers at present," answered Mrs. Montaveril, who had been informed of Mr. Locksly's arrival at Eastmere. "Tell him to come in here and speak to me before he goes away. And, tell me, shall I ask him to dinner?"

"If you like," said Gladys; "but not *en famille*. Ask him with the other people who are coming next week; and don't make a fuss over him, Eloise, I beg of you. I hate to see men spoiled; and Mr. Locksly gets too much of it as it is. Don't seem too pleased to see him."

Miss Montaveril was still a little piqued at the somewhat indifferent manner her suitor had shown, and she was quite resolved that he should have no opportunity of taking things for granted.

Having thrown out these hints to her step-mother, with full confidence that they would be regarded, Gladys crossed the hall and entered the long drawing-room, cool and pleasant in its orderly dimness. Mr. Locksly was standing with his back to her, looking up at a picture, but he heard the first light sound of her footstep in the room, and, transferring his hat and stick to his left hand, he came forward at once, holding out his right, and looking at her with a glance that was the perfection of dignified homage. If he had been the least bit too eager or too ardent, it would have jarred irretrievably upon Miss Montaveril's present mood, which, to tell the truth, was not a very soft one.

"Very well, thank you, and not more tired than I deserve to be," she said, in answer to his first solicitous inquiries. "A great crush like that is an infinite piece of folly: don't you think so? But you were of the wise ones who stayed away."

"Not for any such reason as that," he answered. "I dared to disobey your wish because it went against all my previous visions to have to meet you again, after this long absence, under such circumstances as would compel me to share with a dozen other men the privilege of being near you and talking to you. That was my reason." And then, seeing that she looked not wholly convinced, he added, earnestly, "You will believe this, I hope?"

"Oh, yes," said Gladys, lightly, "I will believe anything you like: I am in a credulous frame of mind this morning."

Locksly looked at her keenly. Then, "I wonder," he said, tentatively, "if it would be a strain to your credulity if I asked you to believe far more than this,—to realize, in fact, that I have come these several thousands of miles possessed by one absorbing desire,—to be in your presence again. Do you believe that or not?"

"Not," said Gladys, promptly; "but I think none the less of you for it."

"Ah! I do not understand," said Locksly, interested and alert.

"I mean that I have a conviction that if you liked me more I should like you less."

"And does your conviction work both ways? If so, my regard for you diminishes from this minute. By the next time I see you I promise that I will positively dislike you, and then, if you keep faith on your part, what must be the result?"

Gladys laughed. She was conscious of feeling pleased and interested. She had no objection to love-making that took this form.

"If we each fulfil our parts," she said, "and I go on liking you more in proportion as you go on liking me less, why, the result is, we keep our distance."

"But with an exchange of places. You are to like me more every hour: remember that."

"And you, for your part, to like me less?"

"Ah, now you put a strain upon *my* credulity that it quite refuses to bear," said Locksly. "The consequence is, it quite gives way: so I decline to believe that part. My mind will not grasp a possibility so impossible."

He moved his chair slightly, as he ceased to speak, and placed himself a little nearer to her. She did not feel afraid that he was going to make love to her in any less abstract manner than the one he had already assumed, and she was sufficiently entertained by this light banter not to object to his nearer presence.

"I have been thinking, as I've watched you this morning," he said, "what an extraordinary facility you have for changing from white to red. I know it is your nature to be white, as much as it is the lily's, only lilies don't blush: they would be much more charming if they did. And how the color comes and goes in your face?"

"I often turn red like that," said Gladys, annoyed to find herself most unwillingly suiting the action to the word, "without the slightest reason for it. Sometimes I have a romantic notion that it comes from some irregularity of the heart."

"Alas, I fear not!" said Locksly. "Your heart, it seems to me, is all too regular,—so quiet and controlled, in fact, that the man who, looking in your face, might risk his soul's existence on the chance of stirring that cold heart, might try with all the ardor he is capable of and yet not move its pulses to a quicker beat. This is how I feel about you, Miss Montaveril, and this is why, after having crossed the ocean to see you, I find myself, on my part, controlled enough now to say nothing more to you than that I hope you find Eastmere amusing, and that I wish you a very good afternoon."

He rose to his feet. Was it possible he was going? There was a mixture of jest and earnest in his tones that greatly piqued his companion's curiosity. He was actually bowing his farewell, when Gladys arrested him by saying,—

"Eloise would like to speak to you: she is in the morning-room. Can you go in and see her a moment?"

"By all means," answered Mr. Locksly, promptly. "I shall be charmed."

Gladys led the way across the hall, and ushered Mr. Locksly into

the presence of her step-mother, who rose to greet him, with some inward astonishment at the brevity of his interview with Gladys, who, for her part, was perfectly aware of this feeling and was herself a little annoyed. She really did like talking with Mr. Locksly, and there was no comfort to her in any conversation in which her step-mother took part, for the reason that she had an inveterate habit of lugging in the topics that interested herself and thrusting aside such as interested others.

When Mr. Locksly had greeted her, he seated himself and fell into a strain of fluent talk so entertaining that even Mrs. Montaveril for once gave herself up to listening, and did little more than make the appropriate responses and signify her warm appreciation by frequent little applauding laughs and nods. Mr. Locksly did not again address himself directly to Gladys, who, for her part, said little. At the end of almost an hour so spent, she was conscious of having been delightfully entertained, and in addition to this consciousness there was another one which was both unflattering and inspiring. Mr. Locksly, she perceived, was not under any very strong spell regarding herself, and she thought with some exhilaration that it might be interesting to see whether she could not rouse him a little from this rather insubordinate attitude he had taken.

"What a perfectly delightful man!" exclaimed Mrs. Montaveril, when the door had closed behind him. "When he really chooses, there is no one who can be so agreeable. And how nice-looking he is! Who wouldn't rather look like that than be the handsomest man of his day! And certainly I never saw any man so well dressed. No one could look at him without being struck by it."

"Do you call that being well dressed? I do not, certainly," said Gladys. "It implies a sort of aggressive resplendency that is the last thing to be desired,—especially in a man. A man, to be well dressed, should wear clothes that create no impression on the mind whatever, for, of course, if they were out of taste they would."

She did not stay to argue the point with her step-mother, but soon went off to her own room, which she entered in a frame of mind which was the one of all others she had least calculated on. She had gone into the drawing-room resolved to prevent a declaration, and now she found herself astonished at her complete and speedy success. Still, there was no misconstruing his intentions, and she had no doubt that he would be ardent enough, perhaps too ardent, before long. She felt interested in conjecturing how she would behave when that time should come, in revenge for his coolness this morning, and she actually found herself hoping that he might call again in the evening, though he had given no hint of an intention to do so. On the whole, she was not displeased with the visit. It had whetted her taste as no other course he could have pursued could possibly have done.

Presently she roused herself from her musing and began to prepare to go out. As a complement to the white lawn dress she already wore, she put on a dainty white shade hat, and, taking up a large white parasol and pair of gloves, she passed down the stairs and out into the street.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE streets of Eastmere were hot and oppressive beneath the mid-day rays of the summer sun, and Gladys felt it a relief to turn in at the gate of Mrs. Acland's shaded cottage. She passed noiselessly along over the grassy path and up the steps, to look in at the window, as she always did, before entering. She expected to find the mother and child as usual having lessons, or telling stories, or talking together. But instead of this familiar scene she saw another that almost took her breath away and held her rooted to the spot.

A tall, dark-haired man was standing in the centre of the room, with both arms around a black-robed woman's form that Gladys knew well. He had drawn her to his breast and held her there, with a pressure of strong tenderness; his head was bent forward, and his lips rested upon her parted hair. The woman was Constance Acland; but who was the man? There was something about him, even in the hasty glance she caught, that seemed the very realization of what she could conceive Arthur Acland to have been: if that creature, who had been described to her as all that was bravest and gentlest in man, could have been materialized before her, it was thus that he might look; but Arthur was dead, and the picture she had seen of Arthur was unlike this. Who, then, could this man be?

Suppressing every other impulse but the one that prompted her to flight, Gladys stepped softly back, and was silently stealing away, when Con came running around the side of the house, with a radiant face, and both hands clutching some treasured new possession, and called out, lustily,—

"Daddith! Daddith! Uncle Davy'th come. Come in the houthie and thee him."

Her brother, of course! How stupid she had been! She felt the pressure at her heart relaxed, as she stooped and tried to silence Con, but she was too late. Their voices must have been heard within, for the gentleman now came to the window, and, not seeing them at first, called out,—

"Come here, Con. Mother wants you."

The words fell on Gladys's ears with a strangely distinct impression. There was a sort of unusualness in the accents and inflections that she could not help observing. It might have been a localism, for David Leigh was a Southerner,—perhaps the first Southerner, pure and simple, that she had ever seen. Whatever it was, it caught her attention and held it, as she turned and looked upward and met the gaze of the gentleman who was standing at the window. As he caught sight of her he bowed his head slightly and just smiled. It was perhaps a more familiar salutation than any other stranger she could picture would have given her, and yet she recognized the greeting as a tribute,—to her womanhood, however, not in the least to her beauty. She had received tributes of the latter class often enough to know their unlikeness to this. The gentleman now turned his head, and she heard him say, in a low tone,—

"There is a young lady with Con." On this, Mrs. Acland appeared at the window beside him, her face still flushed with the trace of tears, but with a wonderful glow of pleasure in it.

"Do come in, Gladys," she called; and when the girl would have made some excuse, she stepped through the low window and ran down the steps impulsively and drew her on into the house.

"This is my own dear brother David," she said, as the gentleman advanced to meet them, "and this, David, is my friend Gladys that I've written you so much about. I have often dreamed about the time when you should know each other, not suspecting how near that time was."

"Daddith ith mine too," said Con, nestling up to her friend, with evident pride in avowing the intimacy in the presence of her uncle. "Daddith ith pitty," she added, by way of enhancing its importance.

A bright flush flew to Gladys's face at this spontaneous tribute, and it is probable that David Leigh, though a smile was his only response, admitted to himself that Con's statement was not to be contravened.

"Aren't you surprised?" said Constance, with the frankness of a child, as they all entered the house and sat down. "Would you have known who he was, if Con hadn't told you?"

Mr. Leigh looked at his sister with an indulgent amused smile.

"Constance forgets," he said, "that this subject, as a field of theory and investigation, is not so important to every one as to herself."

"I think I should have seen a resemblance as soon as I looked at you well," said Gladys. "You *are* alike."

"A little bit, perhaps," said Constance, as if with some reluctance, "but not very much. I never flattered myself I was more than just a little like David."

She smiled affectionately at him, as she spoke, as if aware he was being slightly disconcerted, but too sure of her friend's comprehendingness to mind.

"Really, Constance," said David Leigh, with a little laugh, "it's to be hoped Miss Montaveril knows how to make allowances for you.—You mustn't judge her by the ordinary standard of sisterly prejudice," he said, turning to Gladys, "or you will make a great mistake. She hasn't learned wisdom with years, I find."

Constance drew herself closer to her brother on the sofa and took his hand.

"Gladys knows all about it," she said; "at least she's had some hint of what I think of you. Oh, David, it is so blissful to have you with me again! I didn't know anything could make me so happy."

Her voice choked suddenly. As the significance of these words came home to her, they brought a swift and vivid picture of the past before her,—of the times when Arthur had been the third person in their trio,—and the poor thing, overwrought by the unusual excitements of the day, suddenly lost her self-possession and burst into tears.

Her brother, with a motion of great tenderness, put his arm around her and drew her closer to his side. As she dropped her head upon his shoulder and hid her face, he looked up, and met a look in Gladys's fervent eyes that said so plainly "I know" that there was no need of

explanation. It seemed to establish a quick sympathy between them that made them feel like friends at once. Thinking her movements would not be observed, Gladys rose to go, but Mrs. Acland, perceiving her intention, dried her eyes, and, sitting up, said, earnestly,—

"Don't go, Gladys. Please don't. It is over now. It is only that seeing David and talking to him has unstrung me. I am not crying because I am sad. I am most thankful and glad, indeed I am, to have my darling old brother with me."

"How did he happen to come so unexpectedly?" said Gladys, seizing the opportunity to turn the conversation. And then Constance proceeded to tell how he had found himself suddenly compelled to go to New York on some law business, and had telegraphed just before starting to a man whom he was anxious to confer with, but had found, on reaching New York, that this man was at Eastmere. So he had followed him here, and might be able to transact his business on the spot, instead of going back to New York.

"Anyway," she ended, "he is going to give himself a holiday and make me a visit. I am sure he needs it, for he looks a little thin."

The object of her recountal and solicitations had sat quietly by, listening with an indulgent smile to all that she was saying, but now a sudden idea seemed to strike Mrs. Acland, for she turned to him abruptly and said,—

"Do go and see where Con is, David, and put some limit to the amount of candy she eats; and don't come back until you are called,—there's a good boy."

"Secrets, I perceive," said Mr. Leigh, rising obediently. "They must be Miss Montaveril's; for Constance has none from me."

"Oh, Gladys!" said Constance, ardently, the minute they were alone, "if you only *knew* how splendid he is! It almost seems to me as if I had forgotten a part of it; but seeing him brings it all back. Arthur often and over has told me he thought David the finest man he ever saw,—though they often didn't agree about things. They were very unlike, and at first I thought I couldn't care for Arthur for that reason, for David had always been my ideal. But what do you think of him, Gladys? Is he handsome?"

"Oh, handsome! Decidedly so. There can be but one opinion as to that."

"I know he used to be thought a perfect beauty when he was young," said Constance; "but he is thirty-six now, you know, and perhaps people might say he had lost some of it."

"Hardly, I think," said Gladys, well pleased to gratify her friend, but, at the same time, perfectly sincere in all she said. "That is, I should certainly never think of calling him a beauty, but it seems to me his face would lose by having the lines of thought and responsibility done away with, and these are the only signs of age I see."

"Do you know," said Constance, smiling at the recollection, "I used to resolve that I wouldn't talk about David, simply because I could not trust myself and would say things that people naturally thought extravagant and silly! And I must refrain from saying all I feel even to you. You shall judge what David is, for yourself. And

now," she said, with a change of tone, as she took her friend's hands and looked straight into her eyes, "I want to hear what you have got to tell me. Have you seen—did your visitor come?"

"He did," said Gladys, rather hurriedly, as if she wanted to dismiss the subject as soon as she could. "He stayed with me about ten minutes, in the drawing-room, during the whole of which time we were bandying words and turning phrases, *à propos* of nothing whatever, and then we went over into the morning-room, to Eloise, where he spent perhaps an hour. It quite appeared as if he liked Eloise the better of the two."

"And you, Gladys? how did you like him?"

"I am bound to own that I thought him quite as attractive as ever, —most amusing, really. I couldn't help it. I asked myself if I had ever known a man who would not be put at a disadvantage by comparison with him; and if he really cares for me it is exactly the modification of the sentiment that suits my taste. Now you are angry and disappointed; I see it; but please don't worry about me: there is not the least danger of precipitancy. I shall pay your opinion the respect of waiting judiciously until I have had time to decide between my estimate of him and yours; and the affair seems likely to hang fire indefinitely."

"Then you'll promise to see me again before the matter is decided?"

"I'll probably see you many times. I feel less in a hurry than I did, and there seems no special indication of haste on the other side, either. So let's drop that subject, for the present. Tell me, now, how long do you think your brother will stay?"

"It isn't possible for him to say, until he has seen the man I spoke of; but I hope and trust he will be here a week or two. He so rarely gives himself any relaxation; and I think he looks now as if he needed a change. By the way," she said, with a sudden smile and change of tone, "I know how fastidious you are about names, and I've been wondering how you like 'David,'—and Con's yet more mellifluous rendering, 'Davy.'"

Gladys made a little *moue*, expressive of infinite distaste.

"I hate them!" she said, emphatically. "Fancy calling a handsome elegant man like that *David*!"

"David the first was a handsome man, too, you remember," said Constance, "and I never heard any one find fault with his name. For my part, I love it. It means 'beloved.'"

"You sweet one!" said Gladys, with a tone of impulsive affectionateness. "It is because you are one of the rare creatures who turn all things to favor and to prettiness! I am thankful at least for the entire satisfactoriness of *your* dear name, and I don't hesitate to say that if you had been called *Drusilla* I should have been constrained to withhold from you quite one-half of the regard I have bestowed upon you as Constance. But now I really must go: I am keeping your brother from you."

"No, you are not. I would have been obliged to give him up awhile to Mammy, anyway, and I know so well how she is drink-

ing him in and gloating over him—her dear young master!—that I feel reconciled to doing without him for a little while.”

“You must send him to see me,” said Gladys, as she rose and kissed her friend. “Con can bring him, and I really want to know him better. We are going to have a dinner next week, and Eloise will send him an invitation. If he stays that long, you must make him come.”

She turned away as she spoke, and so failed to see the look of mingled amusement and perplexity called up by these words in Constance’s face. The latter watched her as she raised her white parasol and walked down the garden-path with its dense green borders, and just as she was disappearing through the gate Mr. Leigh joined her at the window.

“That’s a lovely-looking girl,” said David, with as much dispassionateness as if it was a flower he was referring to, and with something of the same lightness of touch in his tone.

Constance could not resist such an opportunity as this, and, with an impetuous desire to avail herself of her brother’s sympathetic interest, she confided to him something of the anxiety of mind she felt in the present state of affairs. David Leigh had never seen Locksly, Constance’s acquaintance with him having begun and ended during a summer which she spent at the sea-shore with her father, bringing Mammy along as her maid, but Constance had always made a confidant of her brother, and he was perfectly aware of the impression she retained of him after the passionate anger which he had given way to in his last interview with her. He knew that Constance believed him to be selfish, coarse-natured, and cruel, and he did not doubt, himself, that her opinion of him was well founded. Still, it was only natural that his feeling should be less violent than hers. Constance could not bring herself to relate, even to this near and dear brother, the occurrences of the evening before, at the ball: she had a feeling that Arthur had been injured and his memory insulted, and that the injury and insult would be greater if they were known and spoken of. She felt, moreover, that there was no danger of any sudden development in the matter, and a renewed hope that Gladys might retreat from any nearer relations with such a man, by reason of her own instincts and perceptions,—which seemed to her far better than that the revelation she had it in her power to make should force her to such a course. It was impossible, however, but that she should evidence in her manner the greatly aggravated sense of distrust and aversion which her recent experience had occasioned, and so emphatic and almost violent was she that her brother was inclined to protest.

“My dear girl,” he said, remonstrantly, “you go too far; indeed you do. Even long ago he may well have been a better fellow than you gave him credit for; for you must remember the revulsion of feeling that had come to you made you liable to intemperate judgment. And, above all, you must recall the fact that you measured him by a standard by which most men would have shown badly. And, besides this, he has had time to improve. He may by this time be a very different man,—possibly not so unworthy of your friend as you think.

At all events, it is for her to decide; and she doesn't look to me like a girl who would be apt to have small requirements."

"Oh, her requirements are extremely vast,—such as they are,—but I hope you will not lose all interest in my dear Gladys when I tell you that her requirements go very much to the consideration of things that seem to me, as they would to you, the merest trifles. She thinks of a man's manners and looks and gifts of conversation and dress, and all that sort of things, so much more than the everlasting realities. You don't know how it hurts me."

"I don't think it need. If those are the things she has her mind fixed on, she is simply playing at getting married, and when she comes nearer to the event she will see the truth of this; at least I think so. Any sweet young woman who begins to look at marriage in its near and personal application must see that it cannot be entered into on such a basis as that; though as to all that I am very ignorant. I really know very little of the rewards and standards of the fashionable world, and I suppose this friend of yours is a full-fledged worldling, despite the contradiction of the idea that lies in her lovely, earnest eyes."

Constance was silent. She could not make up her mind to tell the whole truth about Mr. Locksly, and, that being so, she realized that it was impossible for her to receive from her brother the comfort of a complete sympathy. She could only wait and see what turn things would take. It was clear to her now that Mr. Locksly's conduct at the ball was only a momentary impulse into which he had been betrayed by the suddenness of his meeting with her again, and that the real object of his hopes and endeavors was to win the hand of the heiress. It was not probable that his affections, such as they were, had ever been engaged in this matter at all. It was doubtless as much a matter of expediency on his part as on Gladys's.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. LOCKSLY'S first visit was followed by another, but it happened that, when he called, Miss Montaveril was engaged with visitors, and he had no opportunity to see her in private, except for just one moment at parting, when he asked permission to call the next morning at twelve. The permission was graciously accorded, but he felt his position less secure than he would have liked,—a fact that gave to his attentions to Miss Montaveril an agreeable stimulus and made the goal he had in view seem all the better worth attaining, since he saw that it would require his best efforts to reach it.

On the morning fixed for this proposed visit, a short while before the appointed hour, Gladys was standing at one of the upper windows of the house, when she caught sight, through the luxuriant shrubbery of the garden, of a man's approaching figure. Her first thought was that it might be Mr. Locksly, but a second glance showed her that it was a taller, larger, very different-looking man, who, as he now came nearer, was seen to have a little child by the hand. Gladys then recognized Mr. Leigh and Con. Screening herself behind the curtain, she

took a deliberate survey of this gentleman, in order to see if she could decide what it was that made him look unlike the other men she knew. A better opportunity of observation was afforded by the fact that the figure she was watching now stood still, as Con broke away and ran off to gather some flowers. Mr. Leigh began to utter some remonstrance, to which Con replied, complacently,—

“Oh, Daddith leth me have ath many ath I want.”

“Go ahead, then,” answered the gentleman, waiting good-humoredly. He stood at ease, with his hands resting on his hips, and looked about him. The attitude was advantageous to the display of his figure, which was a very good one. Despite his wide chest and fine shoulders, he was spare rather than the reverse, and had no superfluous flesh. His closely-buttoned frock-coat set well about him,—a fact due rather perhaps to the lines of his figure than to the skill of his tailor. All the details of his dress were quiet and simple, but from the crown of his light straw hat to the soles of his low-cut shoes there was an indication that his apparel was chosen for comfort and convenience rather than for modishness of effect. The figure was so noticeably elegant, the face so handsome,—in a characteristic way of its own,—the hands and feet so aristocratic and slender, that Gladys, with her super-fastidious notions, felt it to be a shame that a man with such unusual natural endowments should not avail himself of the means of enhancing them. “Nobody could possibly say he was ill dressed,” she reflected; “but why isn’t he well dressed?”

The child, meantime, had returned to her uncle, putting one little hand in his, while with the other she pressed against her face a bunch of fresh roses, burying her little nose in them and sniffing their perfume enjoyingly, as her manner was.

Gladys now left her place of observation, and turned away to go to meet her guests, appearing at the head of the staircase just as Mr. Leigh and Con reached the open front door. Con immediately broke away and bounded forward to meet her, kissing her and showing her roses with an air of confidence. Mr. Leigh at the same time came in, removing his hat and greeting Miss Montaveril with a bow and smile that expressed the most absolute lack of self-consciousness she had ever seen. He even crossed the wide hall and advanced to the foot of the stairs, where Con had waylaid her hostess, and stood there, holding out his hand and smiling, as if they had known each other from childhood.

“Constance sent us over with an invitation to you,” he said, as they turned toward the drawing-room, leaving Con absorbed with some gold-fish in the hall. “To-morrow will be Con’s birthday, and, as it comes on Sunday, it has been decided to celebrate it this evening. The celebration is to be in the form of an early tea,—a ‘small and early,’ Constance says I must tell you,—the invited guests to consist of you and me.”

“I accept with pleasure,” said Gladys, mentally renouncing without effort a reception to which she had meant to go. “I hope it turns out that you are to remain at Eastmere?”

“For the present, yes,” answered David. “I’m glad to say that matter is satisfactorily arranged. By the way, you won’t mind my

saying, now while I have the opportunity, how rejoiced I am to see the friendship between yourself and Constance. It is almost more than I had dared to hope that she should allow the entrance of any new element of affection and interest into her life."

"It was a forced entrance," said Gladys, smiling. "I left her no choice."

"Well, I'm mighty glad about it, anyhow," said David. "It has been a continual source of distress to me that she should be so utterly isolated, and yet there seemed no remedy. It is natural enough that she should desire it, but I dread the effects of a life of such enforced introspection. It is almost certain to produce morbidness, in time, free as she is from it now. I wanted her to come to me; she and Con would have been such a boon to my life; but the mere suggestion pained her so that I never ventured to repeat it. She cannot tolerate the idea of leaving this place; but I hope in time she may give that up, for Con's sake. I always look forward to having them with me after a while, but I see I will have to be patient. She would be wretched—poor thing!—if I asked her now. I am sure she will grow calm in time; but that is all I look for. I don't think all the chances of the coming years hold anything that can give a fresh impulse to her life. The old ones will be her inspiration to the very end, I am sure. One of her old friends asked me the other day if I did not think she would marry again. You can't think how it amazed and shocked me!"

"Yes, I can," said Gladys, earnestly. "I know just how you felt. Was she naturally very gay?—I mean as a young girl?"

"She was naturally the gayest, most light-hearted creature I have ever seen. Why, it seems to me only the other day that the dear little thing was so happy all day long that her presence was just sunshine itself. It is as if a silent hand had just come down and put out her light. You don't know how I thanked God for Con. She doesn't bring daylight back, but she makes the darkness endurable for her poor mother. Sometimes it's simply marvellous to me that Constance bears up at all," he went on. "Her marriage was something you probably couldn't understand, unless you had seen it or something like it. Acland was a man you couldn't be with, without its seeming worth while to try to exalt your own nature to something like a resemblance to what human nature was in him. He was a man, too, of fine powers and cultivated intelligence. Their life together was a little bit of poetry that I think one is the better for knowing about, in this prosaic age of ours. The elements of selfishness and envy and worldly ambition had no part in it. They lived in the perpetual presence of the thought that their union here was the beginning of an eternal companionship hereafter. Acland was a deeply religious fellow, and all the things to come, which are such vague factors to us, were living realities to him, and he made them so to Constance. I am sure nothing but the comfort which springs from that source could enable Constance to be what she is now,—the most patient, faithful, loving, unembittered little soul that ever lived."

"I am sure of it," said Gladys. "The solace and support of her life is her firm belief that her husband lives and loves her still, and

that their companionship is not really broken, but continues in the contact of spirit with spirit, which she has told me she feels the plainest consciousness of, at times."

"I am so convinced that that is the key to the whole matter," said Mr. Leigh, "that I can't help hoping that, once she gets her sensitive organism adjusted to this change in her life, a great tranquillity and peace will follow. Her heart already is where her treasure is, and she is capable of faith enough and self-abnegation enough to feel it, after a while, a most willing surrender of her will to God's, and of her joy here to her husband's blessedness there."

He had talked on earnestly and freely, with that same absence of self-consciousness which to Gladys's unaccustomed perceptions had the character, not of a mere negation, but rather of a positive charm. It did not seem to occur to him to make any apology for entering, with a stranger, upon a subject so near and so private; and this made her feel confident that he realized the sincerity of her affection for his sister.

"I have had enough experience of life," Mr. Leigh presently went on, "to know that it is the fate of most men to be forgotten, and to have known Arthur Acland is almost enough to make me rejoice to see Constance as she is. He was a man so vivid, so inspiring, so spiritual, so replete with power, and their life was such a blending of all the finer essences of humanity, that it seemed made to be eternal."

As he finished speaking, the clock on the mantel began to strike, and as its twelfth reverberating stroke faded into a sound of distant music, a gentleman entered the room.

It was Mr. Locksly, and he came by special appointment. But that did not prevent his seeming at that moment a distinct intruder. Gladys felt utterly unattuned to him, and sincerely wished his appointment had been for any other day and hour.

There were certain of her moods in which she would probably have found him a more acceptable companion than David Leigh, for many a time what she desired most was the sort of association which would counteract any tendency to seriousness. But she was in a very different humor now. She had been deeply interested in her serious talk with David Leigh, and she was impatient of the interruption. She was impatient, too, of Mr. Locksley's manner and appearance, because she felt it would grate upon her companion. He brought such an air of fashionableness and society into the room that she feared Mr. Leigh would regret his confidential attitude toward her of a few minutes back, and be made to think it had been inappropriate; and she feared, too, that he would immediately relegate her to the ranks of worldliness and fashion which Mr. Locksly looked so eminently a representative of, and thrust her out from that other world in which such spirits as Arthur and Constance and himself lived and moved and had their being.

Mr. Locksly wore a single eye-glass, and wore it well,—with the appearance of being able to give his mind to something else besides keeping it in his eye, not easy for a free-born American to attain to.

It was impossible for Gladys to avoid a swift mental comparison between the two men, as she introduced them, and on which side the

advantage rested was a fact to be decided entirely by the taste of the judge. Both were excellent types of their classes.

The name of Leigh was not uncommon enough to warrant any certainty on Mr. Locksly's part that the man he was now introduced to was a relative of the woman he had once loved, and David gave not the slightest indication of ever having heard of Mr. Locksly before. As soon as possible, he took leave, Gladys going with him into the hall to find Con, who had left the gold-fish to bestow her attention upon some canaries and a mocking-bird, whose cages hung in the porch. She was making herself entirely at home, and evidently felt at liberty to make free use of whatever belonged to her friend "Daddith."

When Gladys had kissed the child good-by, and cordially shaken hands with David, promising to be very prompt at the tea-party, she returned to Mr. Locksly with a manner so high up and far off that the quick perception of that gentleman at once divined that this was not the propitious moment for pressing his suit. This was exactly what Gladys had meant to indicate to him; and when she perceived that he had taken the hint, and was entering into an agreeable and unpersonal talk, she gave him so much credit for his discrimination and sense of fitness that she immediately scored one in his favor. It was only a divided interest, however, with which she listened to him, and when he rose to go he could only feel that he had not altogether failed in his effort to please her,—not that he had succeeded.

He made it his business, after leaving Miss Montaveril, to find out who David Leigh was; but the confirmation of his suspicion that he might be Mrs. Acland's brother did not particularly disconcert him. That fact did not in the least prove that Mrs. Acland was known to Gladys, and, as he had been repeatedly assured that Constance knew and received positively no one in the place, he felt himself almost safe on that score. Besides, he was sure that nothing would induce Mrs. Acland to talk about his past relations with her, and it was certainly most unlikely that she should be on such terms with Miss Montaveril as to know anything whatever of his present attitude toward that somewhat unaccountable young lady, whose favor it had suddenly become of the very first importance that he should win. He felt such a zest in the undertaking, now, that if her fortune had been less than the half of what it was he would have found it worth while to pursue the matter.

CHAPTER X.

THAT little birthday-party of Con's was an experience unlike anything Gladys had ever known. The child was in a state of rapture over her presents, one of which, according to an established usage of Mrs. Acland's, was marked "From dear Father." The pretty table, with its splendid flowers supplied by Gladys, and its four candles around a large sponge-cake, was a bright spot for loving faces to gather round, and Con, in her best white dress and widest sash, with Mammy behind her chair in snowier apron and statelier turban than usual, was a bit of merry-hearted childhood to charm the toughest heart. As for

Gladys, this simple domestic scene was so delightful that she was almost afraid to move, lest the spell should be broken and she should find herself outside this charmed circle,—perhaps at some tiresome dinner-party, between the courses of which she had fallen asleep and dreamed a happy dream. During the easy home-like intercourse of that evening she got to know David Leigh better than dozens of ordinary meetings could have accomplished.

One day—it was the morning of the one for which David Leigh had accepted Mrs. Montaveril's invitation to dinner—Mammy and Con came to Gladys with a message from Mrs. Acland to the effect that her brother would be out on business all the morning, and that Miss Montaveril's presence would be very welcome at the cottage.

Gladys put on her hat and went back with the messengers, feeling an amused conviction that Mrs. Acland wanted to find out if anything significant had transpired as to Mr. Locksly.

It was a very easy matter to set her friend's mind at rest on that score, as Mr. Locksly was much too wise a man to injure his chances by undue precipitancy, and had been careful not to pass the bounds of prudence and decorum that Gladys had set for him.

This topic, therefore, was speedily disposed of, and Mrs. Acland, feeling herself free from apprehension in that quarter, fell naturally to talking of her brother, a topic in which her companion showed herself so much interested that the enthusiasm of the speaker led her on to a free and spirited recountal.

"He is a good many years older than I am," Mrs. Acland was saying, "and all through my childhood and girlhood he was my hero. He was superbly handsome, as a younger man,—not handsomer than he is now,—indeed, not so handsome to the eye that sees more beauty in character and spirituality than in form and color."

"He is sufficiently handsome as it is," said Gladys: "that speaks for itself. But tell me, did he use to care for gayeties and amusements and ladies' society? I can see he doesn't care much for these things now."

"Yes, he used to care for them immensely, and paid great attention to his dress, and his carriage and horses, in his boyish days, when he had such things to care for. But he was very young when the war came on, and he went right in, and when it was over everything was changed. You see, David grew up with the expectation that he would always be in affluent circumstances and live in ease, as his fathers before him had done. With his money and position and handsome appearance, together with a simply marvellous power of winning hearts which he used to have when he took the trouble to exert it, he had no end of friends, and was equally popular with men and girls. He used to have love-affairs in plenty, too, but none of them were very serious, and when the war broke out it was perhaps the first real interruption to that sort of butterfly existence. He had recently returned from abroad, with a very striking sort of vehicle that he used to drive behind a pair of horses which had been raised for him on my father's place, and I can well remember my pride and pleasure when he asked me to be his companion the first time he drove it in the park. I can recall the keen

delight his preference gave me, when I saw with what interest and favor the grown ladies would look at him. Well, that was to be his last experience of those conditions and sensations, for he was among the first to volunteer, and all through those four years of dreadful danger to him in the field, and agony to us at home, he fought and struggled and suffered, and in the end came home defeated, disappointed, almost crushed. You, Gladys, with your experience of life, can form no conception of what that home-coming was. Father had been badly wounded, and was at home disabled and sick, and David found his mother and sisters without the necessities of life. When he looked about him to see what could be done, the prospect was black enough. There were immense tracts of land, but no labor to work it, and, besides that, there was not food to eat while the crops were growing. My mother's delicate health and my father's disabled state both made medicines and suitable food imperative. So what do you suppose this elegant young gentleman did? Seeing that to-morrow's dinner even was hypothetical, and the dinners for next week impossible from present resources, he took his horse, which was the only thing he had brought out of the army, and put it into an old cart and went to selling pure, fresh milk in the city near which our plantation was situated. The place was in the hands of the Yankees, of course, and fresh food of all kinds was scarce, good pure milk being especially in demand, and bringing such a high price that it was, in consequence, very generally adulterated by unscrupulous sellers. There were one or two cows left on the place, which were the sum total of David's capital. He got a man to drive his cart, but, finding himself cheated out of half the first day's earnings, he mounted the cart next morning himself, starting long before daylight,—the pampered young fellow who used to dawdle down late to a ten o'clock breakfast!—and drove around his 'route,' delivering here and there his pints and quarts. This was doing things in a comparatively private way; but the performance had to be repeated in the afternoon, when all the city was out. I have heard some of the most fastidious ladies in the place, who were girls then, tell of meeting him with his wagon on the fashionable promenade and receiving from him as frank and graceful a salutation as he had ever given them from his handsome drag long ago. If he had needed anything in the way of moral support,—which he didn't,—the pluck of those Southern girls would have been enough. He had never been more popular nor his society more sought after, but he was much too busy now for devoting himself to young ladies. He drove the cart for one or two weeks, and I've heard him say that the satisfaction of giving pure milk and good measure, when there was so much cheating going on, was one of the most genuine he had ever known. In a little while he saw his way to doing something better; but his 'milk-route,' as he used to call it, in professional phraseology, had secured him the immediate means of providing for those dependent on him, and I think it is an experience that to this day it gives him satisfaction to recall."

As Mrs. Acland finished her recital, she turned to her friend and said, with a smile,—

"I have amused myself by watching the phases of expression that

have passed over your face as I have been telling you this, and I can assure you it has been very funny." She paused a moment, before saying, in a slightly altered tone, "Arthur used to delight in that story of David; and yet I think when I first told it to him it shocked him a little,—as it has you. Perhaps you think it was a creditable thing to do, and all that, but you don't see how he could,—eh?"

"If he had been a Northerner, he couldn't," said Gladys; "he simply couldn't."

"Ah, but being a Southerner he could," said Mrs. Acland. "That makes the difference."

"Drive a milk-cart!" said Gladys, slightly knitting her brows. "It isn't possible for me to conceive your brother in that position. If any one else had told me, I should not have believed it. It may have been very fine,—it was fine,—but—well, it's a sort of thing I can't think of for a gentleman, and Mr. Leigh has so much the *bel air*—don't you know?—that it seems harder with him than most men. It is difficult to imagine an aristocrat's becoming a milkman."

"Is it easier to imagine a milkman's becoming an aristocrat? David would say not. Ah, Gladys, my child, there's an immense deal of unreality in this world, and that is why this blessed brother of mine is so precious to me. He has the simplest nature ever given to man,—so simple that to some people he gives the impression of being deeply complex, so few men are there who are so exactly what they seem as he is. Arthur used to talk to me about this, and took such pride and pleasure in David's absolute genuineness and simplicity."

There was an instant's pause, which Gladys broke by saying, suddenly,—

"Is your brother a religious man?"

"Oh, *deeply*!" said Mrs. Acland, drawing in her breath, and then letting it out, in a strong, emphatic respiration, as she uttered the last word. "And yet," she went on, presently, "he isn't strictly orthodox in everything. He and Arthur thought differently on many points. My husband himself kept strictly to both the letter and the spirit of the gospel, and I used to think David was apt to subordinate the letter too much to the spirit, but Arthur never would say so. He used to say that we were told to judge the tree by its fruit, and then point to David's life, which has always been so simple and true and good. As long as my mother lived, David was just her strength, and after she died he was like son and daughter both to my father. The state of Arthur's health engrossed me, but he never let me be missed, and, now that both of them are dead, he has turned his attention to public affairs; and it would surprise you, and delight you too, I think, to see a man who has such a deep and availing interest in the political and business concerns of his people, and so little personal ambition. I have always been ambitious for him, and wanted to see him a leader of men, but David never cared much whether he got the rewards that most men consider success. I think he felt that he was freer without them."

Gladys rose from her seat as her friend ceased speaking.

"I have got an engagement in *Vanity Fair* this morning," she said. "How I feel as if I were in another world here! You have

given me something to think about, and turned my ideas into a new drift. You don't know what a boon that is to me, dear Mrs. Acland."

"I want to tell you, Gladys," said Mrs. Acland, with a slight hesitation in her voice, "something I have often thought about, and feared you might not understand. You were so cordial and sweet to me in begging me to call you by your name that I thought you might wonder why I did not respond by asking the same of you, and might not understand——"

She broke off, as if unable to proceed, and tears sprang to her eyes.

"Yes, I do understand, dear Mrs. Acland," said Gladys, quickly. "I knew, from the first, why it was, and I would not have it otherwise, for the name that was always dearest to you is dearest to me now too, since I've learned to know you by it, and to understand why you value it more than you possibly could a name that was simply your own."

With these words, and a warm embrace, the two friends parted.

CHAPTER XI.

IF Miss Montaveril was inclined to lament the fact of her step-mother's lack of mentality, she would have been the last one to deny that Eloise had her talents; and these were never brought so fully into play as on the occasions of the handsome entertainments which were given from time to time at one or the other of the young heiress's establishments.

On the particular evening on which Mr. Locksly and David Leigh, among others, had been bidden as guests, Gladys descended from her dressing-room and walked through the beautiful apartments, all lighted and thrown open, with a sense of real gratitude to the being who had secured to her all this harmony of effect and exquisiteness of detail with no further effort to herself than the very slight one of settling the bills. And Gladys herself, what a finish to the picture she was, in her perfect costume that made her beauty yet more beautiful!

The last apartment to be inspected was the dining-room, and there too all was perfect. The silver, the glass, the china, the damask, the flowers,—all were above her criticism. As she stood surveying the scene, Mrs. Montaveril appeared with the dinner-cards in her hand.

"Who is to take you in, Gladys?" she said, when her step-daughter had given her warm tribute to the beauty of the appointments her taste had dictated. "Mr. Locksly, I suppose?"

"Why Mr. Locksly?" said Gladys.

"Well, he's rather the most distinguished of the young men present, and the one likely to be the most entertaining."

"Then he's distinguished sufficiently already," said Gladys, "and in my capacity as hostess I feel it incumbent upon me to bestow the most entertaining man elsewhere. I mean Mr. Leigh to take me in." So the cards were arranged accordingly.

Gladys knew that a fashionable dinner-party must be a thing rather out of David Leigh's line at present, and she half suspected it might

bore him a little, so she chose to take upon herself the task of seeing that he was entertained. This, however, was only one of several motives which were at work in the young girl's breast.

If a desire to conduce to Mr. Leigh's ease of mind was any part of her purpose, she might have spared herself all pains, as she reflected, with some amusement, when she came to look back upon the evening's incidents, for Mr. Leigh's ease of mind was already as great as it could be. This Gladys perceived from the moment when she saw him appear before her astonished vision wearing a frock-coat and colored cravat.

He was among the latest arrivals, and when he came in the room was already tolerably well furnished with guests, the male portion of whom were arrayed in one invariable, monotonous style, the conventional evening dress, which threw into glaring contrast the garments Mr. Leigh was wearing. There was a hum of conversation in the air when he entered, making his way toward Mrs. Montaveril and her daughter, which for one scarcely perceptible instant was arrested by the sort of catching of breath that came upon some of the talkers; in addition to this, there was a just visible interchange of swift glances among the assembled guests when the tall, erect figure had passed them by, but on no countenance present was there so much as the smallest approach to a smile visible. Miss Montaveril's guests were shocked to the centre of their beings, but they all of them bore it more or less like heroes.

Excuse poor Gladys that she too was shocked, but she did not flinch, and neither, in truth, did Mrs. Montaveril, though the thoughts which flashed through the minds of the two ladies were widely apart in their drift. Gladys was keenly lamenting that a man in whom she had recognized so much that was fine, both in mind and character, should have made a blunder which set him, in the beginning, at such a disadvantage, and, in her own acute sensibility to this false step, was perhaps underestimating the courtesy of her other guests and determining to correct the least tendency to slight Mr. Leigh which she might become aware of. Mrs. Montaveril, for her part, was conscious of a certain degree of triumph mingled with her chagrin, and was reflecting that this would perhaps teach Gladys a salutary lesson on the rather reckless way she had of taking up with odd people, if they happened to strike her fancy.

It soon became apparent that David Leigh seemed extremely likely to hold his own. His ease of mind was as great as it could have been under any conjunction of circumstances. He was a man of quick perceptions, and he saw at a glance that his dress was entirely unlike all the others in the room. But what of that? He supposed the other men were dressed in the manner that suited them best, and he was dressed in the manner that suited him best. He should certainly feel himself extremely uncomfortable in such garments and shoes and stockings as these gentlemen were wearing, and he didn't feel called upon to undergo any such constraint, especially as it would cost him more money than he cared to spend to buy an equipment for this one evening which he saw no prospect of making further use of. With these rapid reflections, Mr. Leigh dismissed the matter from his mind, and it recurred

to him no more that evening. His thoughts quickly glanced from himself to Gladys, to the potent charm of whose appearance on this occasion he was keenly alive. He was alive also—though less consciously so—to the potent spell that lingers in every detail of surroundings such as those about him now.

He was unaccustomed to such luxury as this; not only to its more material aspect, but also to the educated taste which had made mere materials conform to rules and instincts which could perhaps have had no existence without some power of self-expression. He lived among people for the most part too poor for such luxury, and those who did possess the means for it had in most cases acquired it too newly to have mastered the subtle question of how to enjoy it. True, there was a class among his own people, as to whom, in all that concerned true refinement, he would not yield an inch to any civilization in Christendom; but these were for the most part poor, and had only the recollection of a time of affluent hospitality and ease. Even with them, he reflected, it was questionable whether an affluence which, when it did exist, took a form so much coarser in regard to material expression, if possibly finer in regard to feeling, could have evolved an entertainment like the present, for which special association and training were required,—an association and training which it would be only absurd for them to pretend to have had. And as with the costumes of the gentlemen, so with the appointments of the house. David Leigh admired them and saw that they were beautiful, but he attached no importance to them whatever. A gentleman's a gentleman, a lady's a lady, and a gentleman's home is a gentleman's home, for all that! he would have said.

It is quite possible that David Leigh attached too little importance to the conventionalities of life, and perhaps he is excusable only on the ground that it is better to give them less consideration than they deserve than to exalt them unduly, and the intelligence and discrimination of this Southern gentleman were such that it may well be believed that if he had lived amid surroundings that necessitated a strict attention to the details of dress and forms he would have been quick to perceive the use and beauty of them. And therefore this indifference to them is to be construed not as a point of superiority, but merely as a provincialism.

The peculiarity of Mr. Leigh's dress was forgotten by himself much sooner than by any other member of the company. Among the men there were some who felt disposed to be sorry for him, until they found how gratuitous their sympathy was, and there was also a less kind-hearted faction who did not quite conceal a disposition to be supercilious in their bearing toward him, but these too gave forth their feelings only to have them thrust back upon themselves, for certainly it had not penetrated the consciousness of David Leigh that any gentleman alive could feel disposed to take a supercilious attitude toward him because his coat happened to be cut in this way, instead of that. The younger ladies thought him handsome at first, and ill dressed afterwards, while the older ones probably reversed the order of this judgment. Even in the select assembly which Mrs. Montaveril's discrimination had got together on this occasion, candor compels the ad-

mission that there was a good proportion who quite lost sight of Mr. Leigh behind his coat. It was a pity; for these were exactly the individuals to whom the lesson of this stranger's presence, costume, and bearing among them would have been most profitable.

All through the early part of the evening, Gladys watched David Leigh scrutinizingly, until at length scrutiny was forgotten in the wider issue of attentive interest. The fact of his being much the handsomest man present did not, even in her eyes, counterbalance the superficial disadvantage of the cut of his coat. If he had been an important dignitary from a semi-civilized kingdom far across the seas, any eccentricity of dress might have taken the form of picturesqueness, but as one of her own fellow-countrymen the thing seemed to have no palliation. Gladys liked him heartily, and she was really attached to his sister, and for both these reasons she would have liked to see him appear to advantage. It was very hard, certainly, in the face of all this, to see him so hopelessly handicapped in the beginning, and she felt sorry he had come. By degrees, however, this feeling passed off, and as she watched David conversing with the people to whom she had presented him she began to realize that her qualms for him had been needless, and she saw very clearly that they were in no degree shared by their object. The perception of this fact gave her real satisfaction, for she knew that David must have realized the incongruousness of his costume, and she knew that any other man present, perceiving a fact like this, would have gone through his part with a sense of blight upon him for the remainder of the evening. So she began to ask herself what rational ground there was for such slavish conformity to conventionalism. Mr. Leigh was very well dressed, and looked—oh, *such* a gentleman, she thought, as she watched him talking to old General Warren, a favorite friend of her own, who listened to him with such interest as made it clear that he, at least, did not view the man in eclipse by his coat. Even before dinner was announced, Gladys had ceased to regret having invited him, and it was not long before she ceased even to regret that he had come in a frock-coat. She was feeling a certain pride in him, which David, if he could have known of it, would have been utterly unable to comprehend. All through dinner this feeling grew and deepened, notwithstanding the fact that he made several small blunders which did not escape her observation. These, however, were invariably in the shape of arbitrary customs, which had no relation to real good-breeding, and as Gladys saw him quietly refusing the things he did not want, declining the use of a finger-bowl because he felt no need of it, eating his ice-cream comfortably with a spoon, neatly refolding his napkin and placing it by his plate, all in such an unconscious, simple way, treating the meal and its adjuncts as if it were so entirely subordinate to the conversation that he had no special attention to bestow upon it, she became conscious of the keenest zest in watching him and getting an insight into the springs of action at work.

Old General Warren, who sat during dinner on Gladys's other side, and who was thus near enough to continue the conversation with his new acquaintance, rather neglected the lady he had brought in, for the

attainment of this purpose, but, as that lady seemed admirably able to take care of herself, it did not give him any great concern. The old gentleman and David Leigh therefore had a good deal of talk across Gladys, who, of course, entered now and then into the conversation, though she chose the part of a listener as far as she could. The general's evident interest in his new acquaintance pleased the girl as much as David's easy, intelligent talk pleased both the general and herself. It was something quite new, in her experience, to see a man whom she had already proved to be almost amusingly ignorant in matters of art, music, modern literature, social gossip, the drama, and all the topics that formed the staple of conversation in the society she knew, talking with an impressive ability upon the more serious subjects of which she was herself ignorant, but which she now found to have an interest above almost any she had hitherto heard discussed. It was in itself an unconventional thing to engage in this kind of talk, which was both literally and figuratively over the head of the charming girl who sat between them, and General Warren knew it, if David did not. The latter, for his part, was anxious to interest Gladys in these topics, which seemed to him so worthy of interest, and he was talking as much for her as for his masculine hearer, and, finding her attention caught and fixed, was satisfied.

General Warren explained his position to Gladys, later in the evening, by saying that he did not often get a chance to talk to a young fellow whose ideas were so clearly his own, and that an old man like himself, who had almost forsworn the frivolity of ladies' dinners, had a right to possess himself of any congenial element that happened to be available, and ended by telling Gladys that she had picked up an acquaintance that was worth having and did credit to her taste. Gladys mentioned the frock-coat, and they both laughed over it, and at the effect which it must have produced on some of the people present.

"Locksly, for instance," said the old man. "I dare say his blood runs cold to this minute."

"No," said Gladys, still smiling. "He is perhaps less shocked than some others, as he is more eminently a man of the world. If he undertakes to belittle Mr. Leigh,—as he may,—he will try to go deeper."

"Let me be answerable to anybody that undertakes *that* task," said the old general. "I fancy I could fight this battle better than you could."

"I'm not sure about that," said Gladys. "I am conscious of holding some very effective weapons in reserve for that fray."

"This young fellow comes of a good stock," went on General Warren. "I knew his father well, long ago, and several other members of his family. We were talking about them before dinner. Look at him now! Can't you tell by the face of the woman he is talking to that his unusual sort of talk has a piquant flavor to her satiated palate?"

"It does look so," said Gladys. "Really, I begin to think a frock-coat at a dinner is quite lovely: don't you?"

This was her last remark, as she glided away to mingle with her guests. As she came near to David Leigh, he rose, but, seeing she did

not mean to pause, sat down again, all the time continuing the recital he had been making, to which the automatically natural action of rising at a lady's approach had been no interruption.

Gladys now felt aware of an almost affectionate pride in her friend's brother, his whole manner was so clearly the outgrowth of an inner grace of spirit and simplicity of heart that made any kind of awkwardness out of the question and redeemed his unconventionality from the possibility of contempt.

When Gladys found herself presently *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Locksly, who up to this moment had had no opportunity for any private talk with her, she treated him with much graciousness, feeling an impulse to draw him out that she might the more keenly point a certain contrast she had in her mind. And Locksly undeniably talked agreeably: he had always entertained her, and he did so still. She mentioned David presently, to see what he would say, but he said nothing. She would have liked him to comment upon the coat, in order that she might have a little skirmish on the spot, with the weapons held in readiness; but he glided away from the subject at once. She had watched David Leigh so much that she suddenly began to wonder whether or not he was observing her. Apparently not: that was a bright woman he was talking with, and she was exerting herself to be agreeable with what looked like a considerable degree of success.

Altogether that evening was one of the most interesting and inspiring that Gladys had ever spent, and after it was over it left her a great deal to think about.

The next morning Mr. Locksly called, and, happening to find Miss Montaveril alone, he came to the point with a directness that showed a strong determination to know his fate without further temporizing, and Gladys, almost to her own surprise, found herself quite ready with her answer, and refused him absolutely, without a qualm!

There was no possibility of misunderstanding the young lady's position. He felt her decision to be quite final, and that afternoon he left Eastmere.

CHAPTER XII.

THERE was something that struck Gladys as being absolutely piquant in the way that David Leigh treated her. She had never felt herself in just that attitude toward any man before. Perhaps she had never been so much on a footing of cordial friendship with a man without receiving from him the faintest evidence of any feeling that went beyond friendliness. She was not in the least vain,—indeed, she was almost remarkably the reverse,—but it had been her misfortune to be looked upon from the point matrimonial by almost every free and uncommitted man that she had ever come in close contact with. She had sometimes wished that she could know one man who would be capable of looking upon her simply in the light of a companion and friend, and her repeated disappointments in that regard had made her come to feel that such a friendship was impossible.

She caught herself conjecturing a great deal about David Leigh.

She wondered whether he hadn't perhaps at some period of his life had an unfortunate love-affair. His uniform cheerfulness—a sort of real sunniness of nature—seemed to contradict that idea, and yet, in spite of this bright temperament, she had now and then had just the merest glimpses of a deep seriousness which piqued her curiosity, at the same time that it awed her a little, so doubtful was she as to what its source might be.

"I have been wondering, Gladys," said Mrs. Acland, one morning, when the two friends were alone together, "what your impressions about David must be. Doesn't he often give you little shocks? I am sure, with your fastidiousness on the little points which he falls short in, together with your lack of interest in the subjects which are so important to him, there must be many moments of inharmoniousness in your intercourse, though I am glad to see you get along pretty well in spite of all this."

Gladys was more than pleased to be invited to a consideration of this topic by Mrs. Acland's own act, and she did not hesitate to say at once,—

"Mr. Leigh interests me very much, and I often feel like asking him and you a thousand questions about his life, and pursuits, and interests; but I don't want to be charged with a vulgar curiosity about him. His being so unlike the other men I know—naturally a recommendation in itself—seems a sort of demand upon my sense of delicacy, and I don't feel myself warranted in asking questions about him."

"Ask what you choose, my dear. If there was ever a man whose life and actions are open to view, to be seen and read of all men, certainly David's are. The positions he takes with regard to his profession, his politics, his social relations, his religious beliefs, are all of them open as day to any who wishes to know them. It isn't a very large place that he lives in, and cannot pretend to go beyond the average in the number of really able and considerable men it has, and although David is comparatively young, he has great weight in the community, and some influence—even a good deal—beyond it. He has taken an active part in all the public interests of his neighborhood for a long time past, and has been so engrossed in these subjects that his reading and study have borne almost entirely upon them. You would be amused—indeed, you, with your multifarious exactions in certain ways, would be shocked—to discover his enormous ignorance concerning many of the matters that, in modern opinion, are held to be the merest rudiments of culture. If you were to put him through an examination on art, you would find his information to consist in being able to name perhaps six eminent artists of ancient times, and almost certainly not one of to-day. As for their works, specifically I doubt if he could, do more than instance 'Raphael's Madonna,' with an air of being positively secure there! Sacred music to him means the hymns he has heard at church, and secular music a few old Scotch songs that he loves to whistle, a few of Moore's Melodies, and a few popular songs of the day that he has happened to hear. Not that he hasn't been now and then to the opera,—for he has. He honestly tries, as far as may be, to make use of his privileges, but not even the most sincerely directed efforts

could evolve any edification for David out of an opera, beyond an occasional sensation of pleasure at some chance sympathetic strain. He knows literally nothing about music, and only loves such music as he knows. Poor Gladys!" she broke off suddenly, "I fear I am lacerating your feelings by this long catalogue of my brother's crimes of omission. And it is something the same with books. We used often to say,—I mean my husband and I" (with the just perceptible difference of tone she never failed to show when she began to speak of her husband),—"what a world of pleasure we might have opened before David by means of books, if we could have lived in daily intercourse with him. Before my marriage I had read comparatively little also, and it was such a wonderful thing to me to make my way into a stronger light and feel the world so much richer and fuller than I had ever dreamed. Arthur thought David so highly gifted,—he often said so,—and when I have lamented the fact that the coming on of the war and the surroundings into which David was forced afterwards, together with the lack of leisure and the necessity for hard work, had cut my dear brother off from the pleasure that comes from a trained appreciation of literature and music and art, he used to say he dared have no regrets about David,—that if his æsthetic tastes were more on a level with those of other men of his intelligence his heart and mind might have to undergo some leading too, and that he'd be afraid to tamper with David. The fact is, the advantages he lacks are trivial in comparison with his superiority to the generality of men in all important points. At least, I think so."

"Men acknowledge his ability, I know," said Gladys. "General Warren says he made an immense impression on the men whom he invited to meet him at dinner the other day, and I know the sort of men they were,—from whom tribute is tribute. I really wish Mr. Leigh cared more to accept invitations and mingle with people. It seems a matter of such indifference to him."

"No, it isn't altogether," said Mrs. Acland: "he enjoyed that dinner at General Warren's extremely,—notwithstanding the fact that I think the distinction of wearing the only frock-coat in the room came home to him a little more on the second occasion than the first. Perhaps that had something to do with his declining two or three other invitations that he has had. The chief reason for this, however, was that he wanted to give up his time as much as possible to me. Do you know, the forms are beginning to make some little impression on David! He actually came to me the other day and asked me, quite meekly, if his ordinary sack-coat and pantaloons would be improper for him to wear when he went to ride with you! not that he cared for himself, but he felt that there might be some reflection on you if he were not properly equipped. But I assured him that his costume was correct enough. You thought so too, I hope?"

"I should think so, indeed!" said Gladys. "Why, he looked superb. I never saw a man sit a horse so well or look so at his ease in a saddle. I can assure you I felt nothing but pride in my cavalier. I asked him how he learned to ride, and he said by the same sort of process as he learned to breathe, so far as he knew: he could remember

the first essay at one as well as the other. It is that, I suppose, that gives him his splendid seat and bearing in the saddle. Do you know, I really enjoy his difference from other men?"

"And so do I," said Mrs. Acland: "only you don't begin to understand how great it is as yet. I want to tell you, by the way, what he had to say about *your* riding-equipment. When he came in from his first ride with you he stated that all his theories on the subject of a lady's riding-costume had undergone a change. 'I always thought,' he said, 'that the ideal thing for a lady on horseback was a long flowing skirt, and a beplumed hat, with floating streamers of gauze veiling; but seeing Miss Gladys in her short, scant skirt, neat body, and high hat has worked a revolution. It is more sensible, certainly. I'm finding out that I'm very green and provincial; but at least I'm open to correction.' Then he hesitated a moment, and suddenly asked abruptly if I supposed you had trousers on, under your skirt, and when I told him I was sure of it, he frowned a little, and then laughed, and said, 'As if a thing like that could matter with *her*!' and I am sure became reconciled on the spot."

Gladys laughed gayly, as she got up to take leave.

"By the way," she said, "I haven't told you one piece of news. Mr. Locksly has gone."

"Gone! Gone where?" said her friend, a tone of relief mingling with her surprise.

"Gone into infinite space, so far as I know, or shall make it my concern to know. At all events, gone out of my path and life forever."

"Oh, Gladys, I *am* so thankful!" said Mrs. Acland, fervently. "But when was this?—and why? Did he speak to you, and did you——" She ended abruptly.

"Yes, he spoke to me, and I——" The sentence was finished by a significant little nod. "If I hadn't been rather preoccupied at the time, I think my vanity would have had a little shock at the clear conviction borne in upon me that his feelings were not seriously involved at all, and that he really cared as little about me as I could have desired. However, I congratulate myself upon that fact. It spares me the necessity of a single pang about him."

She could not help laughing at the fervent little squeeze which her friend bestowed upon her at parting, and the significance of the kiss she gave her.

"Why, if I had just announced to you an auspicious engagement of marriage," she said, "you could hardly have received it with a more impressive cordiality. What a curious creature you are, Mrs. Acland! I don't know what to make of you."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE day following the conversation just recorded, Eastmere was visited by one of the cold rains which sometimes came even in the midst of the summer season. In the evening Mrs. Montaveril, in spite of the elements, went to a dinner, and Gladys was left at home,

with the prospect of a long evening to herself. She prepared to spend it in a pretty little room cut off from the great drawing-room and furnished with much care as her own particular sanctum. Here she had a book-case, containing the works of her favorite authors, and here she kept her work-table, writing-desk, and other special belongings.

Her costume this evening was a long white gown, of some light woollen fabric, simply made, but yet a thing of beauty, with its creamy softness of tint and its pliant drapery. The lace of the bodice fell apart at the fair throat and hung back from the lovely hands. She had put some crimson roses in her breast, more for the sake of their odor than any other effect, as she felt pretty secure from visitors this evening, and had not cared to make a toilet.

It is doubtful, however, whether, with any pains, she could have been dressed to better effect. As she sat in a deep arm-chair, drawn up before the fire, with her little slippers mounted on a hassock before her, and her slim body thrown back at ease, with her hands clasped at the back of her head, and an unopened book in her lap, the young heiress was a vision fair to see. Her gaze was bent upon the fire, and her face looked thoughtful. Her sweet, serene eyes had that austere and nun-like look in them that was one of their most natural expressions. The luxury, the costliness, the sumptuous ease, of her surroundings rather enhanced than detracted from this look, and made it seem that all these accidents were no part of the woman, who was as completely herself here as if, instead of those rich accessories, her body was clad in serge and sackcloth and her face looked out through convent bars.

Presently a bell tinkled, far away, but Gladys, in her absorption, did not hear it. Then a footstep approached along the hall; but not until it had paused before the open door and the visitor had uttered her name did Gladys rouse herself from her revery. She stood up, her slender body looking very tall and straight in its long plain draperies, and extended her white hand in gracious welcome to her guest. It was David Leigh, and it seemed almost a pity he could not know, by the light of contrast, how rare a greeting she was giving him. Gladys knew it, and half wondered to find herself so glad to see him. Perhaps she felt that any other visitor in the world—except perhaps his sister—would have been felt to be an intruder by her just now, but David harmonized precisely with her mood.

He took another deep chair near her, as the girl resumed her seat, and said, in his simple way,—

“You look mighty cosey and snug here, contrasted with what’s going on outside. What were you thinking about, when I interrupted you?”

“I was thinking about you,” said Gladys, half mischievously, though she blushed a little. For an instant she regretted her impulsive speech, but for an instant only, for David answered, in the same easy way,—

“That was mighty kind in you, and I hope it wasn’t anything bad. I’d like to believe, when I’m gone, that you did think about me sometimes.”

"You are not going soon, I hope?" said Gladys. "Are you?"

"Yes," said David, "and that's not the worst of it. It seems to me I'm going so mortal far,—into a different world. I'm afraid I'm going to have hard work to be contented with it, after the pleasure of these days at Eastmere. I'll tell you the truth about it: I don't want to go, one bit."

"Don't go," said Gladys,—oh, so gently!—bending her lovely eyes upon him, and speaking in a low, persuasive voice. "Why should people go away from where they are enjoying themselves?" she went on, in a lighter tone. "I'm sure I never would."

"I have to," David answered, simply; "and that brings me to something I have been wanting an opportunity to say to you." He paused a moment, and then added, "It is about Constance."

"Dear Mrs. Acland!" said Gladys, tenderly. "I hope you are going to give me something to do for her."

"What haven't you done for her?" said David. "You have done the utmost that anybody can do. You have helped her a little to bear her awful burden of sorrow."

"I wish you could have known Acland," he went on, after a moment's silence. "If you had, I believe you would feel with me that, much as poor Constance's grief is to be pitied, it is still a source of comfort to see him so worthily loved and so tenderly cherished in memory. If Constance could have taken her widowhood in the common way, I should have felt that she was unworthy to have been the wife of Arthur Acland. God knows he was well loved, while he lived, and if ever man deserved it he did; and now that he has passed into silence he is well loved still, and remembered as such a man deserves to be remembered. Human love has seemed to me a better thing since I have seen with my own eyes that, for once at least, the grave is powerless to prevail against it."

"You said 'passed into silence' just now. Do you know, with her, that silence is not altogether unbroken, I think? I believe she does hear him speak to her at times, as soul to soul,—or else her strong imagination makes her feel it so."

"God knows. To me, the worst part of death is that awful, mysterious, relentless silence. I look at the poor girl sometimes and wonder how she bears it. She couldn't, with the love she had for Acland, without supernatural aid. I know people do it every day,—people who have no faith and no hope of reunion even,—but there are different kinds and degrees of love, and Constance's was strongest in kind and highest in degree, and, whatever other men and women may do, Constance's kind of love could never be but once. *You* must feel that this is so: don't you?"

"Oh, I do!" said Gladys, fervently; "I never doubted it; but I'm glad, from my heart, that that sort of love is rare. It is what I should flee from more than anything in the world."

She saw that David looked surprised at this, and she fancied he looked a little disappointed as well. He did not speak immediately, and something prompted her to say, almost involuntarily,—

"Wouldn't you? Wouldn't you too have an instinct to escape

from such a love as that, which, however sweet and enduring, must come to an end at last by the merciless hand of death?"

"But suppose I denied that? Suppose I believed that death was powerless to end a love like that?"

"But do you believe it? Does any one but Constance really believe that?"

"Yes," said David, "I do believe it. I feel it, in a way that is stronger than any mere reasoning belief. The mere contemplation of a love like that makes me feel, as some one says, that 'anything that can end is too short.' If you had seen what the married life of Acland and Constance was, I believe you would feel it too. Their brief little earthly union was like a glimpse of heaven to me. Acland was a most sensitively organized man, full of talent and of beautiful tastes for painting and poetry and nature and music, and more or less accomplished in all these arts. He and Constance used to sing so charmingly together: she has never uttered a note since he died, poor girl, except to sing Con to sleep sometimes, but her voice used to be beautiful, and Acland delighted in it. They made little sketches together in their country rambles, and he read his favorite books to her while she sewed. When Con was born, his health was already failing, but they seemed to lose sight of it in their delight in the child. If ever people's cup of happiness seemed full, theirs did then; but how soon it was dashed to the ground!"

"Oh," exclaimed Gladys, with a deep breath of emotion, "nothing can ever seem as sad to me as the fate poor Mrs. Acland has to bear!"

"Yes," said David, "one thing is sadder,—to love like that and feel that death ends it. That is the saddest thing."

Gladys was silent. She knew not what to say in answer to these words. Her own religious belief was such an unformed and unliving thing that it was little to her but a name.

Presently David Leigh went on, in an altered voice:

"All this has led me away from something I had to say to you this evening. I told you it was about Constance, and you may have divined that what I wanted to speak of was my gratitude to you for all you have been to her."

"I certainly should not have divined it," Gladys said, "for I feel that I have received infinitely more than I have given."

"Perhaps there is something to be said on that side too, for I can imagine that Constance's friendship must be something very dear to such a woman as you are; but I can't express to you the satisfaction I have felt in seeing her in the full enjoyment of such an intercourse as this. It has been a great disappointment to me that Constance and Con did not come to live with me, which was what I had planned. Whether or not I share the feeling that binds her to this spot, I am forced to hold it sacred, and I see that for the present she must remain here. Perhaps she may come to feel differently, and then——"

"I don't believe she ever will," said Gladys. "I am almost sure she will live and die here."

"It may be; but I doubt it. Nature is strong, and life has too many interests to be arbitrarily constrained, and I think she will come

to feel that she can love her husband as well, and give herself as devotedly to him, by giving herself the more to others also; and I look to the necessities which will arise in the matter of Con's education and intercourse with others to work a change. If she feels the sacrifice of her own wishes to be incumbent upon her for Con's sake, she will feel that it would be her husband's wish that she should make the sacrifice, and she will do it. Besides, I *do* see a change in her. She is more cheerful: though the change has been very gradual, it is perceptible, and it encourages me to hope for the poor girl's broken life a serenity and peace which ought to be the outgrowth of such faith as hers. And now," he went on, "I am going to take the liberty of asking something as to your own future plans, Miss Gladys. How long are you likely to be here, and what follows after you leave this place?"

"I can do pretty much as I please," said Gladys, rather sadly. "I shall stay here to the very end of the season certainly, and I could stay longer. I have made no plans."

"I am immensely relieved to know you will be here all the season," said David. "Of course, with the demands upon you that there must be elsewhere, you certainly would not stay here longer; but it makes me feel much better satisfied in leaving Constance. I wish I could half say what I feel toward you for your love and companionship to Constance. I never dared to hope for such a pleasure as this for her."

"Shé has told me," he went on, presently, "that you had been abroad some time before coming here; but your home is in New York, is it not?"

Somehow that little word *home*, in the sense in which she knew David Leigh would make use of it, smote upon her now. She thought of the dreary splendor of those walls and ceilings and floors, and it seemed a very soulless embodiment of the idea.

"We have a house in New York," she said, "where my step-mother and I will probably spend the winter, but I don't expect to like it enough to stay there very long. I give you my word I should look forward to the winter with more pleasure if I thought I should spend the whole of it at Eastmere with Constance."

"Just at this moment, perhaps," said David, smiling. "You are in a sort of world-weary mood, it may be, which even the fortunate Miss Montaverils of life may have a glimpse of at times. To-morrow, however, you would recoil at the dreariness of the prospect,—and naturally enough! For my part, it is a pleasure to me to think of the wideness of your sphere. Your influence must be very great."

"Don't!" said Gladys, throwing out her hand, as if to ward off something. "I don't like you to say that, whether you are in jest or earnest."

"In jest! My dear young lady, I never was more in earnest in my life; but I won't say it, if you'd rather not. I don't want to take any upbraiding looks of yours with me, to think about when I'm smoking my evening pipe in my solitude far away."

"Do you live alone?" asked Gladys.

David nodded.

"My room is over my office," he said.

"And where do you get your meals?"

"At the hotel."

"Isn't it very dreary?" asked the young girl, rather wistfully.

"Very, sometimes."

"Why don't you come here and live with Constance?" said Gladys, smiling at her own absurdity, but speaking with great interest.

"For one thing, because the matter of daily bread has to be considered," said David.

"Couldn't you leave there? Is there any reason why you should not move to some larger and more central place, where you would have a wider scope?"

"For what?" said David, smiling.

"Well, let us say your talents and ability."

"How do you know these are not already amply acknowledged?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Gladys; "only I never heard of you, and it seems odd to me now that I haven't."

David laughed, and so did she, and then the girl went on:

"But, seriously, couldn't you leave that place?"

"I could, of course, in one sense; that is, there is nothing beyond my own choice to constrain me; and yet, looking at the matter in another point of view,—no, I couldn't."

"Can you tell me why?"

"Not explicitly, in the limited time we have, but it's a sort of feeling that I belong there. I have blamed other men for leaving their own communities and the interests they were born to, for their own material advancement, and it is what I will never do. All my interests and ambitions and sympathies centre around those people. Perhaps, in my case, the possibilities offered by emigration were not great enough to be much of a bait, but, at any rate, I have felt all along a pretty strong call to stand my ground, and devote my services, such as they are, to my own people."

"If you care for them so much," said Gladys, "it can't be much of a sacrifice for you to stay among them."

"I have never felt it so, I assure you," said David, "and I do care for them very much."

"How do you mean? On a basis of broad philanthropy, or individually?"

"Both."

"Is there a good society there?" asked the girl, feeling the moment the words had left her lips that they were superficial and inappropriate.

"I think so," he said. "There is a good deal of narrow-mindedness, but so I believe there is everywhere. There is also among my people a good deal of ignorance of the conventionalities, but the essence of good society seems to me to pervade and permeate that place a good deal more than Eastmere."

"Eastmere! It might easily do that," said Gladys. "But that subject is too vast for us to enter upon now."

"I have overstayed my time already," said David, rising. "Constance will be wondering what has become of me." Then he held out

his hand, and as she laid hers within it he added, "We've had a nice long talk: haven't we?" with the ingenuousness of a boy.

Gladys kept her seat, looking up at him with positive enjoyment of his stalwart comeliness. She was thinking that he was the most patrician-looking man she had ever seen, and trying to analyze what it was that made him look as different from the other men she knew as his conversation had already proved him to be different. Was it the mere fact of his being a Southerner, of a different type from any she had hitherto been thrown with? That couldn't account for all.

She rose to her feet, and drew her hand away, and turned with him from the room.

"I wonder if the rain is over," she said, feeling a sudden need of conventional words.

"Will you come outside and see?" said David, as he stepped into the porch. "The air feels sweet and refreshing."

She followed him out into the wide piazza, which they found to be flooded with moonlight. The clouds had rolled away, in great high-piled masses, and a glorious summer moon was sailing aloft. Gladys walked to the end of the porch with him, and they stood a moment there together, their faces turned upward, alone in the stillness. The roses near at hand sent forth a delicious fragrance, and just beneath their feet there was a bed of fresh damp mignonette.

"A scene like this," said Gladys, breaking the silence presently, in a soft low tone, "reminds me of two lines of poetry I read somewhere:

"This world is very lovely. O my God,
I thank thee that I live!"

"If that quotation had occurred to me," said David, "I should have thought it was rather my own state of mind than the scene about me that called it forth. To me it seems that nature never creates a mood: she but reflects what we feel. If I had looked out upon this lovely moonlit scene to-night conscious of a restless and unhappy heart, I am sure I should have found nothing but sadness in it. As it is, I feel happy to-night,—incomprehensibly happy,—and it seemed to me you spoke out the very thought of my heart when you uttered those words. Do you feel so too? Are you glad to be alive, for all the great possibilities life has to offer?"

"Yes," said Gladys, speaking low, "I am glad. I am often afraid and restless, but to-night I am glad, like you."

He took her hand again, and said good-night. Then,—

"Do not be afraid," he added, softly. "Trust God and the instincts of your own high soul, and there is nothing in this world or the next for such as you to fear. And remember that thought that is the chief comfort of Constance's life:

"If my bark sink, 'tis to another sea."

She made no sound in answer, and a minute later she found herself alone.

CHAPTER XIV.

GLADYS returned to New York and to the old life there, and settled down to a routine of dinners and balls and receptions of which she very soon began to weary. Early in December a bright thought came to her, and she wrote and invited herself to Eastmere to spend Christmas with Constance and Con. The proposition being joyfully welcomed, she next asked Mrs. Montaveril's young sister, Miss Minnie Ross, to take her place at home, and everything was settled to the satisfaction of all concerned.

The evening before the day fixed for her departure for Eastmere, Gladys gave a ball in honor of Miss Ross. The invitations were numerous, and the affair was to be very brilliant. The young heiress, with her usual munificence, had presented Miss Ross with a splendid dress for the occasion, and as that young lady came down adorned in it, the evening of the party, the hue of her mind was a perfect match to her rose-colored costume. Gladys herself was in pale-green velvet, made long and plain, with a high collar at the neck, that sloped toward the front and bordered her square corsage. The long tight sleeves were made in some quaint fashion that set up high on the shoulders with an effect that certain old pictures have familiarized us with. A loose gold girdle hung around her waist, supporting at her side a downy fan of white feathers, and a gold bracelet of some odd antique design was clasped outside the white glove on one arm, while a collar that matched it was fastened close around her long white throat.

But Gladys in any dress was Gladys still, and as she stood there, in this lovely costume, arrayed for a gathering of worldlings, being herself of the world, worldly, and looked up at her little butterfly of a guest, descending the stairs toward her, the uplifted eyes wore still that nun-like look that in some degree always belonged to them.

The last guest had arrived, and the ball was at its height. The air was melodious with dreamy waltz-tunes and fragrant with hot-house flowers. The halls, bow-windows, and all available spaces were thronged with people, the many-colored hues of the women's dresses throwing into relief the monotonous black and white of the men's. Just as Gladys had begun to feel that her guardianship of her young charge might now be relaxed, as Miss Ross's happy hands were full to overflowing with engagements for the evening, there came to the young heiress's great front door an unexpected guest.

A gentleman, tall and straight and strongly built, paused before the entrance, mounted the steps, and laid his hand upon the bell. Hearing the music within, and seeing the blaze of lights, he paused an instant, as if in doubt, but the hesitation was only momentary. Then he rang the bell and asked for Miss Montaveril. The footman looked at him in perplexity. Miss Montaveril was at home, he said, but she was giving a ball to-night, and—— The pause which followed indicated a strong sense, on the part of the servant, that this was an unexpected and unprepared guest. This guest, however, was not to be deterred from a purpose so earnest as the one he had in view, just now, by any

such trifling considerations as these. He did not feel for his case, for the reason, probably, that he had none. Indeed, it is doubtful if this gentleman had ever possessed such an implement of civilization, or even felt the lack of it before. It did occur to him now that it would be a convenience, but, being without it, he gave his name very distinctly to the man, and told him to tell Miss Montaveril that Mr. Leigh, from the South, would be glad if she could speak with him for a moment, if not particularly engaged.

While the man was gone off on this errand, David awaited his return in the vestibule, from which through the partly-opened door he could command a view of the interior. To his unsophisticated eyes, the scene before him seemed little less than a vision of fairy-land. The glittering chandeliers, with their crystal pendants and sparkling lights and their festoons of flowers and smilax, the tiled hall, over which the ladies' beautiful dresses slid noiselessly along, the narrowing vista of lights and people which he caught sight of in the distance, the harmonious swell of the music in the dancing-room, the warm breath of the perfumed air, all combined to form an influence so entrancing that he was almost startled when he found his messenger again at his side, deferentially requesting him to submit himself to his guidance. As he entered, and walked down the long hall, brilliant with statuary and pictures and burnished armor, following the lead of the decorous-footman, every eye was turned upon him. He had already felt the heat of the house, and taken off his overcoat, which he carried across his arm, with his hat in his hand, and, although his dress was certainly incongruous and his position anomalous, probably the densest person there never for a moment made the mistake of supposing him to be anything but what he was,—a gentleman-guest; though the theory of his being a belated musician, or a confectioner's man who had stupidly come to the wrong door, would have been, to them, much more plausible.

More than one person murmured aloud an expression of wonder as to who that striking-looking man could be, and perhaps a few of the ladies rebelled when the *portière* at the end of the hall fell to behind him and hid him from further view.

Beyond that portal was the supper-room,—a beautiful apartment, fairly dazzling now with its myriad lights blazing down upon a glittering array of china, glass, and silver, together with a wealth of leafage and bloom, and such specimens of the caterer's and confectioner's art as could be put in place prior to the important moment for supper to be served.

To the farther end of this spacious room Mr. Leigh followed his guide, who now paused before a curtained recess, and, holding back the drapery, asked Mr. Leigh to take a seat for a few moments here, adding that Miss Montaveril would join him as soon as possible. David sank upon one of the low cushioned seats of the great bow-window, and the drapery fell to behind him, leaving him alone in this curtained seclusion. The brilliant light from the room streamed in through the arch above the thick gilt rod that held the curtains, and the far-away sound of music fell with a softened cadence on his ear.

Only a few moments had he waited, when suddenly, softly, swiftly,

the heavy curtain was drawn aside, and in the opening thus made, her figure clearly outlined against the brilliant light behind, appeared Gladys,—tall, sweet, beautiful Gladys,—her wonderful long green robe falling richly about her, one lovely arm uplifted against the dark richness of the curtain, and the other stretched out in cordial greeting to her guest. The look in her beautiful face matched it well, as she said, in her earnest tones,—

"First of all I must say how welcome you are, and then I must apologize for sending you to this out-of-the-way nook, but I could think of nowhere else where there was a chance of our having a little undisturbed talk. It is a great surprise to see you. When did you get to New York?"

"I have not been in the city an hour," said David. "I made all possible haste to see you before it should be too late. My fear was lest I might find your house still and dark, and your household wrapped in slumber; and the startling contrast to that picture took me completely by surprise. I venture, however, to intrude upon you for a few moments, to let you know that I am going on to Eastmere to-morrow, and——"

"So am I," cried Gladys, joyfully, interrupting his sentence.

"I know it," he said, in a tone as satisfied as hers. "Constance wrote me of it, a day or two ago. I had been laying my plans for some time to spend Christmas at Eastmere, but I was not certain I could do it, and I said nothing to Constance about it, preferring, at any rate, to take her by surprise."

"Then she doesn't know?" asked Gladys. "How delightful! We will go on together, to-morrow, and how welcome I shall be when it's seen whom I have brought with me!"

"You don't need me to make you welcome there," said David. "You know that well enough. But, now that we understand the matter, I must fly. May I come for you in time for the afternoon train to-morrow?"

"Yes," said Gladys, "do. But tell me, have you had any supper?"

"Not yet. I will get some when I go back to the hotel."

"Not at all! You will get it just here and now, and I will take mine with you," said Gladys. "We will have time to get through comfortably before the general supper-time comes."

And, without heeding his protest, she flitted away, and presently returned, followed by a servant, who speedily set out a dainty little table for two, in the bow-window. With her own hands she took from the magnificent supper-table a bunch of superb rose-buds which formed the apex of one of the centre-pieces, and arranged it in the middle of the little table. Then she gave an order to the servant which he hurried away to obey, and in a short while an exquisite little supper was served, which they sat down to with much zest together. Gladys looked on with quiet enjoyment, observing with inward amusement how characteristic David was in all that he did. When he persisted in declining a certain dish she offered, she was half disappointed, and said,—

"I wish you would try it. I think it is really good. Don't you like it?"

"I don't know what it is," said David. "I never tasted it, and so I can't say whether I like it or not. Don't ask me to try experiments to-night. Everything, as it is, is so exactly to my taste. Isn't it nice and cosy our taking supper together here by ourselves? I hardly know what to make of all this kindness."

"Surely you have not finished?" Gladys said, remonstrantly, as she saw him folding up his napkin. "Indeed you need not hurry on my account. My step-mother has her sister with her, and I am not needed."

"I have quite done, alas!" said David, "and I cannot reconcile it to my conscience to keep you here any longer. You must let me take you back now."

He spoke not a second too soon. Gladys had been just on the point of designating a mode of egress which should be more private than the principal entrance he had come by, when he announced this rather startling intention of his. The young hostess had strongly regretted that David's presence to-night should be attended by circumstances which made it impossible for him to remain as one of the guests of the evening; but it had never entered her head that these circumstances were in the nature of a surmountable obstacle. After all, what was this obstacle? Simply that Mr. Leigh was well dressed in one way instead of another way. He did not even have on a frock-coat this evening, but was wearing the clothes he had travelled in, made of a rough mixed material, with the coat cut close and short and tightly buttoned up. He was a highly distinguished-looking man, however, Gladys reflected, observing about him more than usually what she always admired in him most,—his unlikeness to other men. Certainly in this his conduct matched his appearance and his apparel. There was a uniqueness in his readiness to enter a New York ball-room in this costume that was to Miss Montaveril extremely piquant. She congratulated herself, therefore, that she had not mentioned the side-entrance.

"If you are quite sure you won't have anything else," said Gladys, "let some one take your hat and overcoat, and give me your arm and we'll go and find Eloise. She'll be glad to see you."

"There is one thing else I'll have," said David, standing still and looking down at her. "I'll have a flower, if you'll give me one, to take back to the hotel with me as a tangible proof that I have not dreamed this little supper with you, and that Santa Claus isn't fooling me about our going to Eastmere together to-morrow, to spend Christmas."

Gladys selected the finest of the rose-buds and handed it to him, smiling. He did not put it in his coat. He had never worn a flower in his button-hole, nor the style of costumes that went well with that decoration, so he simply accepted the rose and kept it in his hand.

"I'm not going to stay," he said. "All these people are strangers to me, and I can't expect to detain you any longer. I will see Mrs. Montaveril and take a peep at all the pretty things, human and other-

wise, in yonder, and then I must go. I've been travelling night and day, and I want a good night's rest."

Declining her offer to have his hat and coat taken, he threw the latter over one arm, and, giving the other arm to Gladys, and taking his hat in his hand, they moved off toward the great drawing-room.

Even if Gladys had been less lovely than she was, her position as hostess would have made her a conspicuous figure, and David Leigh, for his part, if he had been less oddly dressed, could have escaped notice in no assemblage where a striking presence would have attracted attention: so it was very natural that, as this couple traversed the length of the long drawing-room at the farther end of which Mrs. Montaveril sat, with a group of chaperones, every eye was turned upon them, and a moment's hush was perceptible in the hum of conversation. Gladys observed it, but she was quite sure her companion did not: the cause was too far from his consciousness.

For almost the only time in Gladys's knowledge of her step-mother, Mrs. Montaveril was for a moment thrown off her guard, and rose, at their approach, with a visibly fluttered air. This vanished almost instantly, however, at David Leigh's simple greeting, as straightforward and unconcerned as if he had been in one of the little parlors of his native town. He explained to Mrs. Montaveril his sudden appearance and the fact that he was going on with Gladys next day to Eastmere, but he made no apology for his costume. The fact was (though no power could have borne this in to Mrs. Montaveril's consciousness); he had forgotten his costume. Of course it was the wrong thing, but how was he to know that Miss Montaveril would be having a party? He had accounted for it to himself so simply that he had forgotten that he owed any accountability to others.

After he had talked a few minutes to Miss Montaveril and the ladies to whom she had introduced him, he said good-evening and went away. Gladys watched him with a zest she could hardly interpret to herself, as his tall figure made its way past the strongly-contrasting groups of men and women in the hall and vanished through the doorway.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN David Leigh reached Miss Montaveril's house, the next afternoon, in compliance with his engagement to take her to the train, a smart little lady's-cart was standing before the door, with a glossy, short-tailed horse in front of it, at whose head a trim groom was standing. He touched his hat respectfully to Mr. Leigh as the latter mounted the steps and rang the bell.

The man who admitted him said that Miss Montaveril would be down at once, and in a few moments Gladys joined him in the drawing-room, which, in its perfect orderliness, showed no signs of last night's festivities, except for such of the floral decorations as had been allowed to remain.

Neither did Miss Montaveril herself show any signs of having assisted at a ball over-night, for she was fresh and blooming as a new-

opened flower, this morning, in her neat, gray travelling dress, so plain and close that it clad her like a sheath. She was buttoning on a stout little pair of gloves as she approached him, saying, gayly,—

"The day is so perfect, and the drive to the station such a long one, that I ordered the cart and thought I would drive you down in that way, so that we might have a better opportunity for looking about us and getting the air. Shall we go now?"

Mrs. Montaveril and Miss Ross were in the hall, to say good-by, and when Gladys had received their light kisses and David had shaken hands, the pair stepped out into the street, and the great door closed behind them.

When David handed Gladys into the little trap, she seated herself on the right side.

"The other side, please," said David, reminding her gently.

"But I want to sit on this side, because I am going to drive," said Gladys, without moving.

"No, you are not," said David, gravely, lowering his voice that the groom might not hear. "I can't let you do that."

Gladys instantly shifted her seat, without a word, and David got in and took the reins. As soon as he did so, the groom let go the horse's head, and the restive animal started forward. David, however, drew him in and made him stand quite still, waiting considerably until the man had mounted to his seat behind and settled himself there in such stiff semblance of comfort as he permitted himself. There had been a smile in Miss Montaveril's eyes before, but at this her pretty lips quivered so dangerously that she had much ado to keep them in order, as her companion gave the horse his head and they bowled swiftly along. The groom, behind, had himself under better control, for, after a momentary twinkle in his eyes, his sense of amusement was summarily suppressed.

David Leigh, for his part, was very far from either feeling in himself or suspecting in others any sense of amusement whatever. As Gladys talked gayly on, pointing out the direction to him and making comments on passing objects, he was unusually silent, and not until they had reached the station and dismissed the groom with the carriage did he seem freed from a constraint which his manner had indicated throughout the entire drive. Then, even before they entered the station, he exclaimed, in an eager tone,—

"Forgive me, Miss Gladys; though how I am ever to forgive myself, I cannot see."

"Forgive you?" said Gladys, gently, with a pleasant, unresentful smile. "You have not offended me."

"Then it is only because of your tremendous kindness," David said. "It was an unpardonable liberty that I took. I spoke from an instinct I have against seeing a lady drive at all; but seeing a lady driving when there is a man seated at her side, seemed to go so against my feelings that I allowed myself to be betrayed into a great rudeness. Thank you heartily for taking it so sweetly. I deserved punishment."

"Oh, these things are matters of custom," said Gladys, lightly. "It is very usual here. Don't the ladies drive in the South?"

"They are beginning to do it, but I don't like it," said David. "I disapprove of it in general because I think it unsafe, and in particular because I think it——"

"Unwomanly?" asked Gladys, as he paused. "If you say that," she added, smiling, "I'll never drive again."

"I wouldn't have used that word," said David, "particularly when I remember the many times I've seen Constance driving Acland about in their little phaeton at Eastmere. But then Acland was a sick man, and as long as I continue to be a well one you shall not drive *me* about, Miss Gladys, although I'll take pains, in future, to assert myself with less rudeness. I assure you, after I had spoken to you in that unpardonable way I felt so ashamed of myself that, but for the groom's being within hearing, and the public within sight, I could have gone down on my knees to ask for your forgiveness."

"I assure you it was much more agreeable to me to give it to you sitting," said Gladys, answering his smile with another. "But I must repeat that I was not offended. I was amused a little, and I think I was even a little bit pleased."

"Well, you're mighty sweet to say so, anyway," said David, as if he didn't entirely rely upon her own version of her feelings.

They had been pacing up and down the platform during this talk, being a little ahead of time, but now they got on the train and took their places, and in a few minutes more were whizzing along toward Eastmere.

During the hours of travel, heavy clouds had gathered, and by the time the journey's end was reached the snow was falling thickly. The winter's twilight was closing in as the train drew up at the Eastmere station, and the ground, as far as the eye could reach, was covered with a mantle of snow well suited to Christmas Eve.

Mrs. Acland had sent a carriage, with a trustworthy driver, to meet Gladys, supposing, of course, that she would be alone. As they drove along over the noiseless streets of the deserted town, where only an occasional light gleamed here and there, showing dimly through the thick-falling snow-flakes, it was difficult to realize that this could be the gay and populous watering-place, which Gladys had never seen before except in its gala time.

Her long talk with David in the train had been full of interest and inspiration to her, and she felt herself in a state of conscious well-being which she had perhaps never experienced in such measure before.

They must have been keen ears that were listening for those carriage-wheels, for, in spite of the muffling effect of the snow, they had been heard, and as the horses paused in front of the little gate the house door was thrown open, and a cheery flood of lamp-light streamed out upon the snowy path. The curtains to the familiar little drawing-room were drawn back also, and everything looked bright with expectation.

As Gladys sprang from the carriage ahead of David Leigh, and ran up the steps, she saw Constance standing in the open door-way with Con at her side, the tall figure in black and the small one in white making a pretty silhouette against the bright background. In another instant both had seized upon their guest, and were kissing, the one her

face and the other her hands, according to their respective opportunities. In the midst of this happy confusion, a gruff voice from the porch was heard to say, "If you please, 'm, the lady left her humbrella," and every one turned to look. Con, who was timid about strange men, flew to Mammy, who stood farther back in the hall; and what was the surprise of both the child and her protector when the next instant they beheld Mrs. Acland in the arms of the supposed hackman!

As this individual now threw off his hat, Mammy recovered her breath, and, with a nearer approach to positive glee than Gladys had ever witnessed in this discreet personage before, exclaimed,—

"My marsters! Eff 'tain' Marse Davy hisseff!"

"Oh, merthy!" said Con, employing her favorite expletive, as she emerged from behind Mammy's skirts, wrinkling her nose up, with a little grin of relief. "I thought it wath a man!"

Happily convinced of the mistakenness of this apprehension, she sprang forward and ran to greet her uncle, who promptly mounted her on his shoulder and bore her in triumph to the cosey little room near by, where, amid much kissing and laughing and rejoicing, the necessary explanations were made, to the entire satisfaction of all parties. Then Mammy had to be formally greeted, and when she came forward with her air of stately humility, and courtesied with her usual self-possession as Gladys took her hand, she made a picturesque figure in the pleasant domestic group.

It was the cosiest of tea-tables round which they all gathered a little later, and as Con folded her little hands and asked a blessing, every heart responded after its own kind. Mrs. Acland looked more lovely to-night than Gladys had ever seen her: excitement had flushed her cheeks and made her eyes sparkle, and even Con noticed it, and said,—

"Mother, you 'ook tho pittty. Are you glad to-morrow ith Tith-muth?"

"Yes, darling," the mother managed to say, before some inward feeling that rose could make speech impossible. Neither David nor Gladys was surprised to see the tears spring to her eyes.

When the meal was ended, and the party had adjourned to the pretty little room, that looked cosier than ever, with its warm winter hangings and bright open fire, round which the lounge and the easiest chairs were drawn, Gladys took Con on her lap, and David drew his chair near by, and the three fell to talking of Santa Claus and speculating as to what he probably had in his sleigh that very minute.

Constance, meanwhile, had slipped away. Leaving that little group chatting merrily before the fire, she glided from the room, softly closing the door behind her. Once in the hall, her motions became more rapid, and she almost ran up the long staircase, and entered her room, shutting the door to behind her. There was no light here, and she groped her way across the floor in the darkness, stumbling once or twice against the objects that came in her way, until she reached the little recess where her husband's picture was, a spot more than any other about the house sacred to his memory, and there, throwing up the sash that interposed between her and Arthur's grave, she sank upon her knees and burst into smothered sobs. The cold night air came in and chilled her, the

snow-flakes whirled against her face, the keen wind tossed her hair and stung her tender flesh, but she heeded nothing.

"Oh, my precious darling," she sobbed, in half-inarticulate whispers, "don't think I have forgotten you! Don't think I am cruel, to laugh and be merry and cheerful, when you are out there in your cold, cold grave! I have not forgotten you one instant. I think of you with every smile and bright word I utter. God knows I do, my darling: ask Him to let you see it too! Only be as true to me in heaven as I shall be to you on earth, and we shall be happy together again. Look down upon me, dear, and you shall see nothing but faithfulness in all I do and speak and think. You shall see that no widow that ever lived was ever more faithful than your own poor Constance, that you loved so well on earth, and that surely you *must* love still, wherever you may be."

These words and sentences she uttered brokenly through stifling sobs. As she ceased to speak, her bowed head rested still a moment, as if in silent prayer. Then she dried her tears and looked up; but before her all was darkness. The snow fell noiselessly; the relentless night wind made her eyes smart, and sent a cold chill through her. She raised those tear-strained eyes to heaven. Above was darkness too, but, as she looked up, a blessed radiance came into her soul, and her poor sad eyes grew calm and hopeful, as if beyond the clouds and snow they had seen the light.

A feeling of sweet tranquillity came over her, as she rose from her knees, shut the window, and shook off the snow-flakes that had gathered on her dress. She lighted a lamp and bathed her eyes and smoothed her hair, and presently went down-stairs with a face so serene and cheerful that the loving eyes that greeted her, although they could not fail to see the traces of her tears, were able to take comfort in the blessed conviction that she was one of those who sorrowed, but not without hope.

"Come, chickadee," said the little mother, holding out her hand to Con and motioning her to her side, "you must come away to bed now, so that mother and uncle and Gladys can dress the tree. Mammy will stay with you when I come down."

"Oh, merthy!" said Con, with a sigh of remonstrance, although she skipped from Gladys's lap and prepared to obey. "I do with I tould thee you dreth the tree."

"Santa Claus wouldn't like that at all," said David: "he'd be as mad as fury."

This argument was all-potent, and Con docilely kissed good-night and trotted off.

Mrs. Acland soon returned, and at once sent David to bring in the tree, which had been set up on the back porch, and in a little while the neat drawing-room was in a state of wild confusion. Boxes were opened, and papers scattered far and wide. David and Gladys had to unpack their trunks to get their contributions, and Constance had to make no end of hurried trips up- and down-stairs, collecting things; but the tree was small, and every one worked with a will, so before midnight everything was in place and the tree pronounced a great success.

Gladys had never assisted at such a scene before, and she enjoyed it thoroughly; and David, with a contrasting memory of his bachelor existence at home, enjoyed it quite as much.

When Mrs. Acland and her brother were carrying off the boxes and papers, Constance suddenly turned aside, and, putting a broom into her friend's hands, said,—

"Mammy is with Con, and I have let the maid go to bed: so you can just brush up the room, if you please,—provided you know how."

"Oh, Constance!" said David, remonstrantly, although he was smiling, "fancy Miss Montaveril with a broom in her hand! What will she do with it, I wonder?"

"She'll soon show you what she'll do with it," said Gladys, beginning to sweep, with an assiduousness that argued more will than capacity. Somehow she felt almost hurt at David's implying that she wouldn't know how to use a broom.

David threw back his head and laughed, as if he thought the joke extremely good.

"I can't help going back in memory twenty-four hours," he said, "and recalling the present manipulator of the broom-stick as she looked then, in her green velvet and gold, the special object of homage to that host of grand people. What a metamorphosis!"

"I believe she's twice as happy at this moment as she was at that," said Mrs. Acland; and Gladys thanked her for the speech, with a fervent glance. She had observed in David Leigh, before, this tendency to set her down as a butterfly and a worldling, and she believed, in spite of all his courteous kindness of manner, that he rather scorned her for it.

When the room was restored to order, and the tree had again been inspected and commended, Mrs. Acland went off to the dining-room for some little final adjustment of things there, and as soon as she was out of sight David took up a small morocco case which Constance had placed among Con's presents, saying, as he turned to Gladys,—

"I know what this is. Something in the name of her father, for the child's Christmas-gift. This is a sacred custom with Constance."

He opened the case and revealed a little locket on a slender chain. Touching the spring of the locket, the lid flew open and showed a little circle of hair, plaited in three strands, which showed distinctly three different colors.

"It is Acland's hair, and hers, and the child's," said David, half under his breath. "And look at the inscription!"

Gladys held the locket to the light, and read: "A threefold cord is not easily broken."

As she gave it back, she had no words to speak. The only answer she could give was in her eyes, and even there it was obscured by tears.

"It is impossible to feel that a man is dead, when he is loved like this," said David, as he quietly put the little box back in its place.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was a homely little room upon which Miss Montaveril opened her eyes that Christmas morning,—a great contrast to the sumptuous, silk-draped walls of her own apartment; but if it was homely it was also home-like, and the girl was conscious of a strange sense of peace and good-will in her heart, and felt as if she had a good Christmas day before her. The little maid who brought her hot water and made her fire wished her a merry Christmas really as if she meant it, and she seemed to herself to have entered into a new world, where formalism and coldness and artificiality were not.

Presently the door flew open, and Con bounced into the middle of her bed, crying out, "Tithmuth giff, Daddith!" and scattering abroad the contents of her stocking; and as Gladys drew her under the warm bedclothes and hugged her close, the sense of strangeness in the things about her increased still more, but so did the sense of sweetness too.

"Mother hath done to father'th grave," said Con, "and carried the lovely wreath'th we made, and all the pitty f'owerth. I'm doin' thith evening, if 'tain't too tole, and take my f'owerth. It'th Tithmuth in heaven, too."

In a little while Mammy came, with her good old face wreathed in genuine Christmas smiles, and courtesied her respectful salutations, and then carried Con off to be dressed. Then Gladys got up and made her own dainty toilet, and came down-stairs in her long green gown, bordered and trimmed with brown fur, with a sprig of holly in her breast, and joined the group around the cheerful Christmas fire. Mrs. Acland kissed her affectionately, and no allusion was made to the widow's early walk through the deep snow to the grave up on the hill, but her gentle face was still glowing with the exercise and exposure and her smooth hair somewhat ruffled by the bonnet and veil just laid aside.

As David Leigh gave Gladys his hand in friendly greeting, their eyes met, and that interchange of glances added something sweeter still to this morning's sweet experiences.

The breakfast that followed was a charming little meal, and the faces that gathered around the daintily-spread board were very cheerful ones, even that of the black-robed widow, though now and then the tears would spring to her eyes and cloud, for an instant, the sight of her child's merry face.

After breakfast the servants were summoned, the tree was exhibited, and the presents interchanged,—such pretty, loving, thoughtful little gifts from each to each, that made their hearts still warmer; and when the servants, in their turn, had received their presents, and expressed their thanks, and gone, Mrs. Acland said it was time to get ready for church. She went off, leading Con by the hand, and David Leigh and Gladys were left, for a moment, alone.

"I wonder if you will believe me when I tell you that I never in my life have had a present that I liked so well as this," said Gladys, handling tenderly the implements of the exquisite little work-box that had been David's present to her.

"Not that you'll know what to do with it!" said David, laughing, while the pleasure her words gave him sent a glow from his heart to his eyes.

"How can you?" said Gladys, reproachfully. "I do know how to sew, and I will know better and do more of it, just for the sake of using these delicious little things. Isn't it strange that nobody ever thought of giving me such a present as this before?"

"Isn't it rather strange that anybody should ever have thought of it at all?" said David. "That may be the strange part."

She did not answer in words, but as she passed him and went upstairs he thought her eyes reproached him.

As Gladys and David walked to church that Christmas morning over the snowy Eastmere streets, with Mrs. Acland and Con in front, the former in her dense black widow's dress and veil and the latter in a bewitching little white furry coat and cap and muff that had been her Christmas-gift from Miss Montaveril, Gladys observed, with some surprise, that almost every one who passed recognized the widow's dark figure in spite of its muffling veil, and that the men took off their hats to her respectfully, the women bowed, and the children smiled up in her face as if some ray of brightness reached them even through her veil.

It was a very humble gathering that they found assembled in the colorless, plain little church, but there were many happy children's faces, and the looks of earnestness and simplicity on those of the grown people had a sweet effect on both Gladys and David. There had been some slight attempt at decorations, and the smell of fir and pine and cedar was strong on the air. For the first time Gladys heard Constance sing, when the weak little organ struck up a Christmas anthem. It was a beautiful rich voice, but now, alas, it was sometimes choked with tears, which the poor widow could not altogether keep back. Gladys thought of the lines,—

While tears that have no pain
Are tranquilly distilling,
And the dead live again,
In hearts that love is filling,—

and she knew that these were such tears as that.

After the service, David and Gladys went off ahead, thinking it better to leave the mother, for the present, alone with her child, and Con's merry talk proved indeed the best restorative, for by the time the party assembled around the beautiful Christmas dinner Mrs. Acland's sweet face had grown cheerful and serene.

In the afternoon David and Gladys went for a walk. They wandered long and far through the barren snow-fields, until, at last, a sort of weariness came to the girl, and she began to feel exhausted by the unusual amount of exercise she had taken.

They were just approaching a vast bare field, the entrance to which was barred by a high gate. As David made a motion to go forward and open it, Gladys checked him.

"No," she said, in a tone that was listless and low, "we have gone far enough."

She did not turn, however, but rested her muff, into which her hands were thrust, on the topmost bar of the gate, and dropped her chin upon it. The little close bonnet that she wore had also a sort of furry trimming, and her face, in the midst of this soft setting, looked sweet, fair, dainty as only the pure loveliness of youth and innocence can look.

Her eyes, serene and lucid, were fixed upon the barren fields stretched out before her, all their vast sweep of levels and undulations covered with a white, untrodden sheet of snow. The sun had sunk below the horizon, but a brilliant red glow lingered after it, against which the delicate stems of a group of far-off trees were clearly outlined, in a tracery fine as sea-weed. A little above the tallest tree-tops, the evening star blazed forth, scintillating in a setting of pale pink, and higher still swung the half-grown moon, a silver crescent on an azure field.

Still beyond thought was this winter landscape; beautiful beyond words. The clearness of the frosty air made moon and stars look very close, and heaven seemed near to earth. Far as the eye could reach, there was not a living creature save this man and woman only. Surely there was a spell in this apartness together that wrought upon the soul of each. Gladys, as she stood there, absolutely still, and gazed across the frozen fields into those deep wells of light that God had set on high, felt her soul uplifted and borne aloft to the realms of some better world.

And David Leigh! He was not looking at the snow-clad fields; he saw neither the bright, cold star nor the distant moon, serene and pale. Gladys could wear that nun-like, austere look, when her eyes saw only ice and snow and barrenness, but his eyes, imperious, grave, and passionate at once, were fixed upon a widely different sight, a woman's fair and lovely face, and the glowing beauty of this vision enthralled his soul and thrilled his senses.

As Gladys rested still and looked away at the star, David, as motionless as she, stood and took long draughts of deep disturbing pleasure, as he looked at her. A feeling he had been arrogantly trying to deny and crush leaped up and mastered him now, and defied him to tamper with it any longer. He saw what a weak fool he had been to seek to dupe his own heart thus, and he felt that heart bound with a leap of mighty triumph, as he gave the battle up, and body and soul and mind and strength proclaimed his love for Gladys!

Oh, to tell her of it! To ask her, on his knees, whether it were not possible that some day she might let him love her! If it could only be! But for the spell that silence laid upon him, and but for a certain awe which the look of the woman's face compelled, perhaps he would have spoken. If he had, there was but one manner of speech that could have come from him then; but he felt he dared not break the stillness of this young girl's rapt reflection until, by word or sign, she should give him leave to speak. The moments sped, and word there was none, as he stood and looked at her, with each hand clinched

hard in the pockets of his coat, where he had instinctively thrust them out of sight in the first great need of self-mastery that had come to him. But every moment, as it passed, weakened that sense of self-subjection, and his resolution was swiftly giving way, when the sign he had looked for came.

It came, however, in a different guise from any he had looked for,—in the guise which, of all others, made the strongest appeal to him. He had thought she would turn and speak to him,—perhaps smile at the long silence that had fallen between them. But she did not speak; she did not move, by so much as a muscle; but he was very near to her, and the winter twilight was clear and strong, and now it showed him a large tear-drop that had welled up in her eyes and overflowed upon her cheek.

Its effect was like magic. It stilled his passion, while it roused his tenderness. It showed him plainly the calm sadness of her mood, so keenly in contrast to his own fervid agitation. Yes, she was sad and depressed this evening, and what was it he had been about to do? A selfish, cowardly thing! One instant of returning reason sufficed to show him what he had never lost sight of before,—how impossible it would be to take Gladys out of her world into his, even if he could win her; and even in this moment he knew he could never give up his own place and his own people; that he never thought of. And yet, with all this clearly worked out and settled in his mind, he had been just on the brink of saying words which would have filled her gentle heart with a life-long regret. That one tear he had seen should be the last she should have to shed for him, please God!

Even as he made this sudden inward resolve to renounce, it came over him, as it never had before, what this renunciation was going to cost him. Well, let it cost him what it might, it should cost her nothing; not even one pang of her sweet compassion to ease his aching wound! She had never given him one vestige of right to suppose that she could love him, and, thank God, she did not even guess at this mighty love for her that burned and throbbed within him. He looked at her and saw her still and grave and silent, and she seemed to him now as far beyond his reach as the evening star up yonder.

He was a strong man, schooled to self-control, and his will and purpose did not falter. When Gladys turned, at last, and proposed they should go back, he walked along beside her, as composed and calm as she. That little tear-drop had had no successors, and her face and voice were cool and natural as they took their way back along the frozen roads. David felt she wanted to be silent, and he made no effort to make talk. The voice of his heart would fain have had its way, but he had forbidden utterance to that, and any other talk would have been a trial to him. He wondered what the source of that tear had been, but he ventured not to ask, and Gladys, if she had been questioned, would not have known how to reply. The strong feeling that had shaken David had somehow touched her too, by some mysterious communication of influence. She had known that he was feeling deeply as they had rested at the gate together,—that the hour was fraught with some strong feeling for him as well as for her. She felt an im-

patient unwillingness to analyze her own emotions, assuring herself that it had been only an unaccountable fit of depression that had overtaken her, and hurriedly dismissing the subject from her mind. What it was that had so strongly moved her companion she ventured not even to guess.

When they reached the house, tea was ready, and Mrs. Acland and Con were awaiting them. It was a quiet meal, for after the excitements of the day were over Con was pretty well worn out, and it was not strange that in the little lull that had been allowed to Mrs. Acland a mood had come which, however quiet and submissive it might be, could not be fruitful of much talk.

Soon after supper David lighted a cigar, saying the night was so fine that he would smoke it outside, and went off almost at the same time that Con's sleepiness compelled her mother to take her away to bed.

When Mrs. Acland returned, Gladys was seated before the fire, sunk in deep reflections, which her friend seemed to have no will to interrupt, for she sat down on the lounge beside her without speaking.

It was Gladys herself who presently broke the silence.

"What do you do with yourself all these long winter evenings, when you sit here alone after Con is in bed?" she said.

"Sometimes I read or sew," said Mrs. Acland, "but more often I just sit and think."

"And *can* you think about the past—such a rich, bright, beautiful past as you have had—without bitterness and tears? The more I know what your life has been, the more I pity your awful loneliness."

Mrs. Acland made no answer for a moment. She glanced at Gladys's averted eyes, which still rested on the fire, as if she were hesitating about something she had it in her mind to say. Presently she did speak.

"I love to have your sympathy," she said, "and it really is some comfort to me to know you are sorry for me, but as I sit here by my little fire alone, without the pale of human companionship, with the keen winter winds howling outside over Arthur's grave, you do not know how often I am sorry for your loneliness and how gratefully I lift my heart to God in thankfulness for the blessedness of my lot in comparison. My husband is my companion still. His grave, though not himself, yet remains a sweet proof to me that my darling once existed in the flesh, and shall exist so again, while I feel that his pure spirit is with the blessed angels, in a wider, fuller life than ours, and I sit and feed my ardent hopes upon the thought of the joys that God has prepared for them that love Him. I know God loves me. I speculated and wondered about it for a long time, but I know it now, and *if* He loves me He *must* somewhere, some time, somehow, give back to me my dear one. Then again," she went on, after a short pause, "I look back, and what a wealth of precious memories I find to comfort me! At times, I don't deny, I am unhappy, and my sorrow bears upon me heavily; but these times come more rarely now, and do not last for long. You don't know how my faith has quickened since I first used to talk to you. I believe you have somehow been a help to

it, by revealing to me the strong human needs for which I felt I knew the only answer. It is no mere hope, but an ardent conviction, with which I can say now, 'I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.'"

"Oh, I've been thinking of that," said Gladys. "I tried hard to think it out, the other day, and I just came against a dead wall. I couldn't make anything out of it. Will the body rise as it lay down? Will the old rise old, and the young rise young? If so——"

"Oh, it will be the *best* way," Mrs. Acland cried. "Don't you suppose I have thought out all that too, with torturing pain? We must content ourselves just to leave it, and I have been able to do that, at last; and surely you may do it too. Nothing but the Christian faith gives any hope, and that gives enough,—though you may call it little, in view of the mysteries and limitations we are bound to meet,—enough to live by in youth, enough to bear maturity and old age, enough to die by. Only, to those who truly love God, the little soon grows to much. Be sure of that, dear Gladys, as I am."

Gladys felt herself deeply stirred.

"As I hear you talk," she said, "my faith grows stronger. I hope indeed it is all true that your husband's love is kept for you in heaven, and that all the sweet and perfect happiness you crave may be given to you there. It is something to feel that perhaps it may be so, and even I can feel that."

"Yes, it is something to feel that perhaps it may be so, and it is much to believe trustingly that it will be so, but it is *all*—all comfort, all joy, all rest and peace and happiness—to know certainly that it is so. But this is a long lesson, and perhaps you do not need to be taught it wholly yet. Do not fear, however. It will come to meet your hour of need. Oh, Gladys, open the channels of your heart for a greater in-flowing of the grace of faith. The immutable certainty of what God has decreed concerning future life is altogether beyond our control, but what we believe about it we may, to a certain extent, control. Our denial of a future life affects the fact not a whit, but what it does affect immeasurably is our own destinies. What God has ordained is to be, whether we believe in it or not; but if we believe not, we are cut off from the hope of glory; and faith lies so much in the will. What we submit our wills to receive, surely God will grant us, through His grace, and you, my dear Gladys, I love to think are set apart for a peculiar revelation of His highest mysteries. Be still, and listen for His voice, and it will call you away from the world and into a heaven which He sometimes permits to have its beginning on earth."

Gladys looked into her companion's face and saw it radiant with happiness. A joy not of earth and sense shone from it, and at the sight the girl believed and trembled.

"Oh, Mrs. Acland, I feel you are right," she said. "I have given up my will. I want nothing at this moment but that God shall take me and lead me in the path He would have me go. I used to think that you were miserable, and contrast your sad lot with my bright one, but I believe now I was wrong. Beside your riches of memory and treasures of hope, my life seems filled with emptiness, and I believe

that in all that constitutes true happiness you are happier far than I. I am more to be pitied than you are."

As indeed she was, by so much more as Never is a sadder word than Nevermore.

CHAPTER XVII.

IT was the evening before the day that Gladys had set for her return home. Mammy had gone to a church festival, and Mrs. Acland had taken Con to bed, saying as she had left the room that she was very tired and might not come down again. She was half ashamed of her transparent little *ruse* to leave David and Gladys alone together, but her fond heart had been very heavy these past few days, because of the sort of constraint which she had observed between her brother and her friend ever since that walk together on the evening of Christmas day. David would make pretexts to be absent from the house, and spent a great deal of time in hunting. Altogether a spirit of inharmoniousness seemed to have settled upon the party, which every one observed, but no one alluded to.

Poor Mrs. Acland! She saw how things were, but she felt herself powerless to alter them. She knew perfectly that David had given the whole love of his heart to Gladys, and she would not believe but that Gladys, if she saw that this great gift was hers, would accept it. She had seen nothing to convince her that her friend had any feeling stronger than a warm regard for this dear brother of hers, but she could not believe that David could sue hard for any woman's love without obtaining it.

And David? What did he feel to-night when he found himself thus left alone with Gladys in the seclusion and stillness of that home-like fireside?

All through these long days of voluntary exile from the bright presence in which he was now forced to remain for a while, he had hungered and thirsted for a chance like this, and feigned a thousand times what he would do and say if it were really within his grasp, with no strong inward motive impelling him to silence. Ah, what he would do, in such a case as that, was clear enough, but such a case as that could never be! Over and over, in those long rambles with his gun, he had fought the battle out and taught his mind the difficult lesson that Gladys was not for him. He had tried to fancy her in his Southern home, and had worked the picture out to its last details. He imagined the beautiful, gifted creature, indulged as she had always been, and accustomed to change her whole environment whenever the whim might seize her, tied down to the narrow life of his native town, deprived of all the amusements that had made the pleasure of her life heretofore, and feeling that her fate had settled her there, and the idea filled him with horror. If his lines in life had been cast in the brilliant places where hers lay, then he would have felt himself free to try to win her, but now he felt, in the strongest manner, constrained to stifle such a feeling at its source. Whether he could overcome this strong, deep passionate love that she had roused in him was a question for the

coming years to settle; but he felt that, to the extent of controlling the expression of it, he had already overcome.

He was not afraid, therefore, when he found himself thus left alone with her, so near the hour of parting. Indeed, what he felt was a sort of exultation that once more the chance was his of being near to Gladys, so near that his eyes could read the looks in her eyes, and his hand, stretched out, might touch her in the flesh.

There she sat on the other side of the little table that held the lamp, restfully leaning back in the deep chair and bending her eyes upon a book that she held in one hand. In his present position her face was partly hid from him, so he rose, with deliberation, and moved to a chair on the other side of her.

"Are you engrossed in your book?" he asked, with a more familiar and friendly tone than she had lately been accustomed to hear from him. It roused her to no unwonted feeling, though, as she closed the volume and looked at him coolly, she felt that it would be impossible to keep up a feint of reading.

"I have read it before," she said, "so I don't suppose I can claim to be engrossed."

David leaned restfully back in his chair, looked straight at her, and said, deliberately,—

"Since you've put your book away, perhaps you won't mind helping me out with a quotation that I've been trying to get the right of, as I've sat here, these last few minutes, looking at you. See if you know it. It runs something like this: 'I was wondering if the subtle measurement of forces will ever be able to measure the force there would be in one beautiful woman, who was as noble as she was beautiful, and who would make a man's love for her run in one current with all the great aims of his life.' That isn't exactly it, I know; but do you recognize it?"

"Yes," said Gladys, succeeding in speaking quite steadily, but utterly failing in her effort not to blush: "it is from 'Felix Holt.'"

What did he mean by quoting this passage, that contained the very highest ideal of what a woman should be, now at the very time that she was smarting under treatment that showed all too plainly that he put her on a level with the frivolous worldly women who, of all others, presented the strongest possible contrast to this high ideal? For David's words to her through all these recent days had been the outgrowth of what he kept constantly before his mind, in order to enforce the contrast to himself and his lot in life,—that Gladys was an important figure in the world of fashion and found there her legitimate and proper sphere. Surely he could hardly have been aware of how insistently he drove this idea home to her, in the light talk he permitted himself with her, or of the pain he had thereby cost her!

A spirit of consciously-controlled self-will had possession of him to-night, and, after a moment's silence, he went on, seeing that Gladys did not mean to speak.

"You have one marvellous gift that I wonder if you are aware of," he said,—“a power of assimilating the feelings of those about you. It takes a great effort for me to identify you, as you are here with Con-

stance and Con and me, with the being who a few nights ago was the central figure at Miss Montaveril's grand ball."

"Why do you talk to me like that, Mr. Leigh?" said Gladys, drawing herself upright and speaking excitedly,—*"as if I lived in a different world from you, and some great barrier stood between us!"*

"My dear young lady," exclaimed David, *"you are innocent indeed if you don't realize that! If I could show you my world,—my real world, where my lot is forever cast, where all my interests, efforts, and future purposes centre,—you would see it all plain enough. You have seen and known me outside of that world, where I am off on a holiday, merry-making, and taking my ease, and basking in the sunshine of worldly prosperity and ease and freedom from care, which is anything but my natural element. If it was in my power to show you my real world, I would do it. I would not spare you one detail. It would make you open your eyes, Miss Gladys, and perhaps you would pity me; and yet I am far from feeling that I deserve your pity on that score. I believe you would wonder at it, but I wouldn't change places with any man alive. Not that I feel my place in life is very desirable or brilliant,—but only that it is my place."*

"I wish you could show me what your life at home is like. Can't you tell me about it?"

"I despair of doing justice to the subject. Distance softens things so much; and perhaps if I were quite candid and explicit you wouldn't believe me. I think that quite likely."

"One thing I know about it," Gladys said: *"it has been an industrious life, and a laborious and patient one. Mrs. Acland has made me understand that. At all events, you have used your powers and achieved something, and that does put it on a different plane from mine."*

"You make me smile when you talk like that," said David, suiting the action to the word. *"Even if I granted the premises, who could expect achievement from such a one as you? Who would have it? And as to my achievements, what do they amount to? In the way of reputation, not so much as to extend far beyond my own county, and in the way of money, perhaps not much more than would pay Miss Montaveril's milliners' bills. I have worked; it would be affectation to deny that; but, if you had a full light upon my circumstances and condition, you would be compelled, I imagine, to put me in the ranks of the deserving poor."*

All this bantering talk afforded Gladys no amusement. She did not pretend to smile at it, and perhaps her companion saw that it was discordant to her mood, for he changed his tone of voice, and went on more seriously:

"I wish I could bring before your mind's eye the picture of my room at home, where so many of my quiet hours are spent. I would like to let you see how bare and barren and unbeautiful it is, and what the hotel is like where I take my meals. I would like to show you, also, the people who are my daily associates. I have often wondered what you would think of them. I have my own opinions of them, but I should like much to have yours. Sometimes I have fancied you

would like them, though they do not travel and cultivate their minds: their cultivation is of a kind which, for the most part, comes through the heart. There are only a few people in the place who know much about the great world from experience, and I don't see that they are much the better for it. Modern literature makes its way to us but slowly, and we have no one to tell us exactly what we ought to think of it, when it does come. As for our knowledge of art and music and poetry, I am a fair specimen of the average rate of appreciation, which, it is true, goes to show you that there are those among us who are not such absolute Philistines as myself,—if I may be allowed to make use of a newly-acquired phrase. All that I have said will convince you, I feel sure, that the two worlds you and I live in are very wide apart."

Gladys turned a scrutinizing look upon him.

"Do you think the people of your world inferior to those of my world—to adopt your classification—in good breeding, and refinement, and cultivation in its highest sense?" she said.

"Certainly not," said David. "I think them, on the whole, superior in those points. My slight experiences in Eastmere and New York have exalted my place of residence in my eyes. Oh, I love my own, Miss Gladys, I assure you, and in all essential points of true refinement I'll not yield to you an inch; but we all judge by the standards we've been brought up by, and I am conscious that if you judged my people by your standard they would fall short. I can't imagine you in that little town. It is probable you have been told that you would be at home in any society; but you need not believe it, for there is one sort of society, and that of a rather superior sort, in my judgment, where you would be completely out of place. I can't help knowing that, though I don't suppose you could understand how it is."

He paused, but Gladys made no answer. He had no light by which it could be shown him how deep his words had gone. It was one more pressure on a wound that rankled. Gladys was pale to-night, and her costume of unbroken black heightened the effect of her pallor. David wondered to himself what made her look so pale and weary, like a tall lily that the ruthless wind had bruised and buffeted until it had no power to stand erect. Even as this comparison was passing through his mind, she banished it, by rising, with a sudden air of will, and drawing herself up to her full height, as she said,—

"I think I will go up to Constance now."

"Will you?" said David, with an impulsiveness he could only half subdue. "And to-morrow you go back to your own place and portion, and we lose you,—Constance and I. New York is a big place and Eastmere a little one, but I doubt if New York can estimate its gain enough to counterbalance our sense of loss. Miss Montaveril has been very good to shed her light upon us for a little while."

The unexpected softness of his look and tone changed the girl's mood instantly.

"Miss Montaveril!" she said, with a feint of gentle perplexity. "Who is Miss Montaveril? I seem to have forgotten."

David felt a dangerous relentingness coming over him at the sound

of these playful words of hers, and the consciousness of it served him for a warning. He still had his hand on the reins of his will, though its hold had relaxed for a moment.

"Who is Miss Montaveril?" he said, stepping back from her a pace or two, and looking straight into her eyes, as he folded his arms across his breast, and stood erect, and unsupported, between the girl and the door-way toward which she had turned. "Let me tell you who Miss Montaveril is. If you have forgotten, I assure you I have not. She is a great and beautiful lady, high up in the world's esteem, whose gifts entitle her to the homage of men no less than her circumstances decree that she shall have it, whose mission it is to be the focus of ball-rooms, the admired of men, the envied of women, and to go through life in obedience to the leading of a brilliant destiny. It is in this way that I shall know Miss Montaveril in the future, as the distant echoes of the great world reverberate faintly in my ears, as I shall sit alone on winter and summer evenings and wonder how it was that once that queenly lady and myself had seemed to stand together in the guise of friends."

Gladys, who was very still by the table, resting her little hands upon it, and looking down, seemed to grow even paler than before, as the words of this light banter fell upon her ear.

"Why do you talk to me," she said, her voice altered and shaken by some feeling he could not at once comprehend, "as if I were fit for nothing but to live in ease and wear fine clothes and be fashionable? It may be so, but, if it is, the fault is partly the way I've been brought up; and perhaps I might be different if any one believed in me and would help me, instead of looking down on me and despising me, as you do."

For an instant David was struck dumb, and then he burst out vehemently:

"Look down upon you! Despise you! God knows you are monstrously mistaken. Shall I tell you, for once, the truth about how I think of you? As God is my witness, Gladys, I think of you along with my thoughts of the women who have inspired men to the best and noblest deeds they have done in all ages,—such women as those for whom the knights of old went forth to do battle, with their ladies' colors on their armor and 'For God and her' on their lances."

Gladys stood completely still, as he ceased to speak, save that her bosom heaved with her rapid breathing, and the little hands that rested on the table trembled. David saw this, but he dared not venture to interpret it: she might be very angry at the fervor he had shown. And Gladys, for her part, felt only a longing to escape, for she was perilously near to the betrayal of a feeling which now, in an instant, she realized. What woman living would not have thrilled to such homage as this? Its potent touch upon the folded bud of her womanly reticence was enough to burst the flowers into bloom, and it was the consciousness of loving that made her tremble. But with it came a feeling even stronger,—the fear of self-betrayal,—and in obedience to this feeling she moved from her place and crossed toward the door, murmuring as she passed him a half-confused good-night.

David felt it was, in truth, the real good-by, and the feeling; half-mastered his stern resolve. As she passed, he caught one little hand in his, and bent and kissed it. Then she glided from him, and he was alone.

What had he done? he asked himself. How far had he betrayed the secret he had resolved to guard so vigilantly? What were the words he had uttered, and what interpretation could be put on them? Even as he thrilled to the recollection of that kiss upon her hand, he mastered himself for a stern arraignment at his own tribunal. He had forbidden himself the joy of self-expression, and his will was still relentless. Never had his sober-colored, insignificant life seemed more unworthy her acceptance than it did at this moment. He had thought it possible, from many little signs, that he could perhaps have won for himself from that gentle heart some sign of tender feeling, if he could have permitted himself to beg,—for there was a power in him of commanding affection which he was not unconscious of,—but he would have despised himself if he had allowed himself that license. He could not join lots with Gladys. Their destinies were too wide apart. He could not imagine himself asking her to make the sacrifice of all that made life pleasant to her now for his sake, and not even for her sake could he leave the path that duty had marked out for him.

Far into the night he paced his room restlessly, or lay on his bed with haunting, perplexing, tormenting thoughts. Again and again he rehearsed within himself the words and looks and actions of that little scene with Gladys; but there was one point on which his faithful memory played him false. Perhaps it was a treachery of consciousness rather than memory, for he had never even been aware of it, when, in the preoccupation of his fervent protest, he had called the young girl by her sweet familiar name, without any form of prefix. Constance always called her Gladys, and it was the name by which she had lived in his memory throughout these months of lonely banishment from her presence, and the little word had escaped his lips without his knowledge.

Not so with Gladys. In spite of the throbbing pride she had felt when he uttered those words of fervent tribute to her woman's nature and influence, in spite of the sweet rush of tender emotion which came at the recollection of that little tender kiss upon her hand, the sound of his voice as he had called her Gladys was the sweetest thought that haunted her that night, and the last sound that fancy wafted to her ear before her happy spirit lost itself in dream-land.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DURING the period of tranquil sleep that came to Gladys that night, David Leigh scarcely lost an hour's consciousness. By the time morning dawned, his long vigil had weakened his body, as the thought of the parting that lay before him had weakened his will. He felt the need of physical exercise and the inspiration and vigor it imparts. So he rose before the sun, and, taking his gun, let himself quietly out of the house, only pausing to tell the maid who was stirring below that Mrs.

Acland was not to keep breakfast back for him, as he was going to try to shoot some game for Miss Montaveril to take away with her, and unless he was back sooner he would meet her at the train.

When the little party of three assembled at the breakfast-table, the maid delivered her message, which fell heavily enough upon the hearts of two of them, although Con was the only one to utter a protest.

"Uncle Davy ought to thtay at home to thee Daddith," she said, indignantly. "Daddith don't want any bird'th. Do you, Daddith?"

"Oh, yes, dear," said Gladys, coolly, "I should be very glad to have some."

Mrs. Acland heard the steady response of the controlled young voice, but she dared not look at Gladys. A cruel sense of disappointment had fallen on her heart, and poor Gladys, who had waked this morning with a sense of confused happiness and had come down-stairs in a sort of wondering foreboding of some great good that she was getting near to, felt this rush of ardent feeling thrust back upon her heart by a cold, relentless hand. She questioned herself angrily now as to what this foolish feeling had meant, and, in the light of what had just transpired, she plainly saw it to have been without foundation.

Very soon after breakfast the carriage came that was to take her to the train, but David had not arrived. No one mentioned his name as Mrs. Acland and Con got in after their guest and drove with her to the station.

There David was awaiting them, his strong, erect figure clad in picturesque hunting-clothes that bore the stains of much usage, but which, notwithstanding that, seemed to heighten the impressiveness of his Southern type of beauty, with its unconventional freedom of aspect. He was leaning on his gun and watching for them, when they turned a corner and came in sight. Whatever may have been the expression that his features had worn hitherto, it changed now to animated greeting, as he stepped forward and helped the ladies out, taking his sister by both hands, and lifting Con out bodily, and then just reaching out his roughly-gloved hand for Gladys to touch, as she stepped to the ground. She laid her dainty little glove upon it for just a second, and then passed him lightly by. He turned and walked beside her, calling attention to his well-filled bag of game, which he said he would stow away in the baggage-car, to be delivered, with his compliments, to Mrs. Montaveril. He had been uncommonly lucky, he said, this morning. If Gladys and Constance wondered within themselves at this, David did not. He knew from experience that he always shot better under strong excitement, and this morning his aim had been unerring.

They paced the platform for a moment or two, preferring not to enter the heated little station-room, which looked dark and uninviting. Gladys did not suffer her eyes to dwell on David often, but she could not help seeing that he was looking better and handsomer perhaps than she had ever seen him look before. His face was flushed with the vigor of early exercise, and a strange animation kindled in his eyes. His figure looked its very best in these rather shabby old hunting-clothes, which he wore with such a fine freedom. The girl thought for

the thousandth time how his looks contrasted with the appearance of the other men she knew, but this time she perceived the fact somewhat dully, for all the keenness of sensation which ought properly to have belonged to this hour of parting with three such friends was, somehow, strangely lacking.

Presently the train blew in the distance, and then came bustling into the station. As she clasped the child and covered her face with kisses, and then raised Mrs. Acland's veil to give her one long embrace and kiss full of a fervid meaning which neither chose to utter, David hurried away to dispose of his game in another car, and came back just in time to put her in her seat, and then, with a hurried hand-clasp, he was gone, and the train was whizzing on its way.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE first days of Miss Montaveril's return to New York were characterized by such a spirit of restlessness that she scarcely allowed herself a moment's time to think. Miss Ross's presence in the house was an excuse for unlimited festivities, and they went from one place of amusement to another, gave dinners, entertained company, and worked hard to kill time. Poor Gladys! she felt as if these long hours must be got through somehow, and she wanted to tell Constance how she spent her time, that Constance might tell David Leigh. Sometimes she tried to convince herself, in spite of those last words of glowing tribute, that David cared for her not at all; but then would come the memory of that low caressing utterance of her name, as if it were a habit of the heart to call her so, and she felt that could not be.

Until the day fixed for David Leigh's return to the South had come and gone, there was an unacknowledged hope in her heart that, against her will, she rested and took comfort in; but now that day was really past, and she was compelled to realize that he had passed her by, on his way through New York last night. She had been weak enough to excuse herself from some engagement and remain at home, and a wretched, self-tormenting, mortifying evening she had had, in consequence. She would yield to such folly no more. There was nothing for her but a headlong plunge into the gayeties and frivolities of the great world; and that plunge she would take. Her pride predominated over every other feeling and urged her to this course.

New Year's morning dawned with a potent significance of its own for every heart. How yearningly we, some of us, reach back into the past on New Year's day and agonize to let the old year go! That is when that dear old year has held for us some supreme good which no coming one can bring again. With others, how the reaching is all toward the future, with its ardent promise of joy to come!

Poor Gladys Montaveril! Neither case was hers on this New Year's day. There was little behind which it gave her pleasure to turn back to, and little of promise ahead. There was only the gandy, empty, insipid present, and after the morning had dragged through all its tedious length, and she had made as merry in it as she could, there was nothing

more to do, in the evening, but to dress for a reception to which she had promised to accompany her step-mother and Miss Ross.

After dinner came an interval in which the ladies had leisure to retire to their apartments, to rest awhile before dressing for the evening's festivity. Gladys had no sooner stepped out of her gorgeous dress—leaving it a costly heap upon the floor for her little maid to pick up—and put on a soft loose dressing-gown and thrown herself upon a lounge, when, contrary to her expectation, a sort of heavy languor came over her, which precluded active thought and made a really restful nap seem possible. After a few moments' stillness there, she fell into a profound sleep.

She had lain in this unconscious state a long time, when Molly entered the room, and, perceiving that her young lady was having a refreshing sleep, began to tip about very softly, making things ready in the dressing-room, and laying out an exquisite costume which was destined for this occasion. When all was in readiness, Molly glanced anxiously at the clock on the mantel, and saw that she would have to wake her mistress. She felt very reluctant to do so, and stood a moment beside the lounge on which the lithe loveliness of the sleeping girl's long body was lying, and looked down with a sort of timid tenderness at the fair face, serene and happy in its tranquil sleep. When at last the little maid reluctantly bent over and called her mistress's name, Gladys opened her eyes with a sweet, bright smile, that was followed, the next instant, by a swift contraction of pain.

"Oh, Molly," she said, in a trembling voice, turning away and covering her face with her hands, "what made you wake me? I was having such a lovely dream."

"I am sorry, miss," said Molly, in a tone of soft contrition. "I wish you could have slept on; but it is time for you to dress. I have laid out your dress and got everything ready, and I was afraid you would be late."

Gladys made no answer, by word or sign. Her face was still turned away, and her hands concealed it from view. She was so still that Molly thought she must have fallen asleep again, and was wondering whether it would do to let her sleep on, when Gladys turned and rose to her feet, with a suddenly altered air.

"Come, Molly," she said, crossing toward her dressing-room, "I don't want to be late. You were quite right to rouse me."

A little later, as she sat before the mirror, as Molly combed up the light masses of her abundant soft brown hair and fastened it in a shining coil at the top of the dainty head, the little maid, whose adoration for her young mistress made her watchful of every sign, observed the fact that her young lady's thoughts had wandered far away from the contemplation of her own beauty, and prompted the conviction that they must be back in the bright realms of dream-land, where something so sweet and joy-giving must have come to her that the memory of it now in the barrenness of waking thought was fraught with so much pain that it caused a sadness in the face she loved so much to look upon, that cut the girl's kind heart.

Molly's affectionate insight had already revealed to her that, ever

since her mistress's return from that trip on which she had not been allowed to accompany her, something had been wrong, and she even realized the fact that now, as she was arranging the sumptuous robe about the beautiful form she loved so humbly, her mistress was struggling hard against a tendency to tears. Gladys had turned away from the glass and passively resigned herself to the little maid's skilful hands, but when the toilet was completed, and Molly tilted the long glass and begged her young lady to look, Gladys turned slowly and confronted the reflection before her.

Every beautiful woman is a critical judge of her own looks, and Gladys saw at a glance that this new dress became her well and that she had never looked better to her own eyes. The costume was a long, close-fitting gown of thick white silk, that fell in splendid folds that swept away into a mass of glowing richness behind her, where the edge of the heavy train was defined against the carpet by a line of soft white lace. The body was cut square, both back and front, and bordered by a trimming of white lace and gold, and the short sleeves, with their high puffs and gold slashings, were edged with the same rich bordering around the lovely arms. A delicately wrought necklace of pearls and gold, light almost as lace-work, clasped her round throat, and Gladys's pure-eyed nun-like face looked out austere over all this splendor.

The young girl could not fail to see how beautiful she looked, but the sight was one that smote her with a swift sharp pang. She cared less than nothing for it now. It gave her only pain. There was one in whose eyes she would have liked to look her best and fairest, and the thought that he cared nothing for it, that there was no likelihood of her seeing him now, to-night, or ever again, was too much. The tears sprang to her eyes, and she sank back into a chair, helpless to struggle longer.

"Oh, Molly," she murmured, her voice faltering and her lips trembling, while the big tears trickled down her cheeks, "I can't go! I couldn't stand it this evening! I am in trouble, and I should break down and let people see it. You must go to Mrs. Montaveril and tell her I don't feel well, and am going to stay at home. And, Molly, don't let them come in here. Tell Miss Minnie I send my love to her and hope she'll have a pleasant time; but tell them both I want not to be disturbed. Run along, good little Molly," she added, seeing that the girl looked loath to leave her. "Never mind about me. Don't trouble your kind heart. It's nothing very much, and you mustn't say a word about my even seeming sad. I don't want any one to know it. It will pass away, I suppose. It is a thing hundreds of people bear patiently every day, and may enter even your simple little life. I am very weak and cowardly to-night. To-morrow I'll be better."

Gently checking the little maid's protestations of devotion, she sent her off, telling her to stay and help the other ladies. She heard them presently, talking brightly as they passed her room, and soon after the carriage that took them away had rumbled off in the distance.

Too preoccupied to think of undressing, Gladys sat in the place where Molly had left her, and fell into deep thought. What was it

that had weakened her so and made the struggle so impossible to-night? It was that dream, that sweet delusive dream, that summoned up the ready tears at each recurring memory and made her actual life seem so desolate, in contrast with the baseless fabric of that vision. The future was so rayless, the present so utterly dreary; and even the past held no memories of joy on which, like Constance, she could feed her hungry heart and say that cherished line,—

'If my bark sink, 'tis to another sea.'

Ah, Constance was right! she knew it now: hers was the happier lot. How willing she felt now, in her keenly awakened consciousness, to pay for such a joy with any degree of future pain! She rose to her feet, unable to bear these thoughts in silence any longer, and, straining her jewelled hands together until they pained her, she lifted her heart to God in a dumb cry for strength.

"I don't want you, Molly," she called out to the little maid, who had just opened the door. "I will undress myself, and I want to be quiet now."

"William just brought up this card, miss," said Molly, advancing with it timidly. "He wants to know if you can see the gentleman."

"No," said Gladys, hastily. "You ought to have told William I was——"

But while speaking she had glanced mechanically at the card, and read in familiar, pencilled characters the name of David Leigh.

The sentence was stopped short on her lips, and instantaneously her aspect changed. A rich glow of color mounted to her face, the hand that had reached out for the card began to tremble, and she looked at Molly as if bewildered.

The little maid, however, gave no sign, but turned off to reach some misplaced article from the floor, as if she were bent upon nothing whatever but straightening the room.

"The gentleman is waiting, miss," said Molly, still with averted head. "Shall I tell William you wish to be excused?"

"No, Molly," said Gladys, too absorbed to notice the twinkle in the little creature's eye. "Tell William to say I will be down."

As Molly left the room, Gladys crossed to the mirror and looked at herself. Every trace of languor had vanished, and she felt animated by a sudden nervous strength. The idea that possessed her most strongly was that she must guard herself well against betrayal. It was uncertain yet what David Leigh had come for. It might be simply to beguile the time of an unexpected detention in New York. It might be he wished to see her, to confer about some plan for his sister or Con. But then, on the other hand, it might be—— Oh, she would not think of that! Her face flushed deeper, and as she gazed now on the radiant reflection that the mirror gave back, she felt a conscious joy to find herself so fair.

David Leigh was standing in the centre of the room, mechanically turning over some books that lay on the table, when his eager ears grew conscious of a distant foot-fall, and he glanced through the open

door-way to where Gladys, tall and beautiful, came stepping softly, regal and fair as some dream-queen, in her shimmering draperies that trailed after her in a heavy, lustrous mass.

He stood completely still and looked at her, coming each second nearer and nearer to the arms that longed so to clasp her close, the lips that yearned so to kiss her, the heart that thirsted to outpour its torrent of love before her and let her trample on it or take it, as she would. His pulses throbbed so with the bounding blood that coursed like fire through his veins that a sudden confusion seized his faculties, and he forgot to advance to meet her, forgot that he was paying a visit and there were forms to be gone through with, and stood absolutely motionless until she came and stood beside him, holding out her lovely hand in greeting.

As he touched that hand and heard those quiet words of welcome, he remembered himself enough to answer her, but not enough to weigh the words he said, or even to know quite what they were. Perhaps no man as passionately moved as he was now was ever either eloquent or quite coherent.

"Constance sent me," he said, hurriedly. "Constance urged me to come."

Ah, 'twas as she had suspected, then! He came about some plan of Constance's, and not of his own will. The knowledge made her calmer yet. By and by she would have time enough for suffering and disappointment, but now pride was stronger than pain.

"Constance sent you?" she said, her voice clear and sweet and steady. "I fancied it might be so, when your card was brought up to me. What can I do for Mrs. Acland? She knows how willing I am to be of any service to her.

Those silvery notes, those calm words, that quiet air, recalled him to full consciousness of where he was, why he had come, and how useless it all was. Yes, it was utterly useless, that eager, restless, hoping, fearing journey. They were still standing, but he was too unaware of his body to think of a change of posture, as he hurriedly began to speak, looking away from Gladys for fear her eyes would check him.

"You misunderstand me," he said. "Constance urged me to come, but it was to speak for myself, not her. Her loving intuition revealed to her that I was unhappy, and in some way she divined the reason. For a long time she could not speak to me, any more than I could speak to her. You know what her thoughts are about these things. She felt she could not lay so much as the touch of a word upon a thing so sacred. For days this silence between us lasted, but yesterday, the day I was to leave for home, she made up her mind to speak. She told me what she suspected, and I told her all. Perhaps you know her well enough, in her unlikeness to other people, not to be much surprised at what she said. Where I saw only hopelessness, she, with that unworldly vision of hers, saw hope. She convinced me—I was all too willing to be convinced!—that perhaps another woman might be capable of such a love as hers, that overcomes circumstances and ignores all considerations of worldly advantage and makes them all subservient to love. But it is love alone that can work this spell, and

at that thought I trembled. I dared not believe in the existence of such a love for me. There is nothing in me to inspire it. I *do* not believe in it; and yet I am here, Gladys, to ask if it can be,—to tell you that my future is irrevocably bound up with my own people, whom I love and honor and wish to serve above all others, and among whom, in circumstances I have described to you, my lot in life is fixedly cast. I have come to ask you to share that life,—to go away and live with me in that little, isolated Southern town, with no other reward for the sacrifice than such as love can offer. Believe me, I humbly feel my unworthiness to love you, or to ask any sacrifice from you, but I know my love for you is strong and high and tender beyond the power of words to tell, and Constance succeeded in imparting to me some of her ardent hopefulness. She thought it might be possible for me to win your love; but the thought was too presumptuous. She was wrong."

Gladys had dropped into a chair, and was seated with her face averted; but she need not have feared. He dared not yet to look at her, for fear her look might compel him to be silent. Now, however, as he paused, the lovely figure rose and stood erect, the controlled emotion of the last moments mastering her, and flooding her face with a beautiful glow, as her eyes shone with the light of a strong indignation.

"Constance at least did me justice," she said, as David, for the first time, turned and looked at her, "while you, Mr. Leigh——" She had begun in a brave, collected voice, but suddenly it broke and the tears welled up in her eyes. Agitated, trembling, bewildered, David took a step toward her and caught her hands in his.

"I have wounded you," he said; "and yet, oh, Gladys, what do you mean by looking at me so? Are you letting me have hope that some day you may love me? Are you going to tell me that? Tell me quickly, if it is so. Forgive me my offence, and grant me leave to make amends."

She let him hold her hands and draw her closer, while he bent above her and looked at her with eyes that seemed to drink her very soul.

"I can forgive you," she murmured, her voice trembling and her breath coming fast. "You have done me a great injustice. You have believed in me too little. But I can forgive you anything, because I *do* love you."

She closed her eyes beneath his ardent gaze. There was no need of vision now, as she felt herself enfolded by his arms and drawn close against his heart. For a little space they stood in perfect stillness; there was not even a rustle of the silken draperies under which he felt the bounding of her palpitating heart. Presently they drew a little apart, and Gladys opened her eyes and gazed into the steadfast depths of those her lover bent above her, and then their faces neared each other, and they kissed,—a solemn kiss that was to each the seal of an eternal love.

At the same moment of time, far away across the frozen fields and barren forest-lands, a woman in the mournful garb of widowhood knelt

by an open window, praying for these two happy souls, whose perfected bliss was her answered prayer. Perhaps some unseen messenger conveyed to her the knowledge of that moment's sweet fruition for the lovers, for she dropped her face in her hands and murmured,—

"My God, I thank thee——"

But no! With a voice that chokes and trembles, she finishes her prayer,—

"——that life is short."

Her body heaves with her convulsive sobbing; the keen night wind cuts and stings her face, as she strains her eyes to make out, in the silent moonlight, the sacred spot where the tall white cross has cast its shadow on the snow. She sees it dimly through her blinding tears, and feels unconscious, in that moment, of all else except that Arthur lived and loved her once and she has lost him!

Presently her sobs subside, and there follows a great calm. A moment more she bends in humble prayer, and then she lifts her head from its low posture and turns her face up to the splendid stars.

Serene and far they shine, sunk in calm depths of still blue ether, each in its appointed place, answering some purpose in God's universe; and as Constance gazes on that starry sky, a sublime strength seems to come to her, lifting her soul on wings of hope and bearing her in spirit up to where, beyond those farthest stars, rolls the eternal current of that "other sea."

THE END.

METEMPSYCHOSIS.

ONE instant, loved one, do not move! That pose,—
 What memory of long ages gone doth stir
 And tremble near my consciousness? So close,—
 It yet eludes the grasp that would deter!
 Surely, beloved, we have once before
 Lived through this moment in some other state:
 The spell is on me,—stir not,—more and more
 I read the past,—the veil is lifting,—wait!

I see a forest dim,—but thou wert there;
 The young world, half chaotic, was just born;
 And keen with the fresh life of that new air
 I sought thee through the star-enchanted morn.
 I know not what our forms, nor whether form
 Or animate life we had; I only know
 I yearned unrestingly, and calm nor storm,
 Nor strange scenes with unusual light aglow,
 Nor yet the first rare bird-songs ever sung,
 One moment stirred or stilled my thoughts from thee:
 Mayhap the veriest atom, thrilled and strung
 To such sweet tenor, seeks affinity.
 In what deep Aryan woodland, waiting long
 My passionate summons, didst thou tarry, love?
 And with what tender fibres were our strong
 Exultant hopes forever interwove?

And then we seemed for ages separate;
 But once again I found you,—yes,—be sure;
 I see the tropic fern, the fig, the date,
 And in your twilight hair are corals pure:
 We wandered hand in hand by Southern seas,
 Happy and all unthoughtful of the day,
 Content to love, content to watch the breeze
 Make fragrant ripples on our white-reefed bay.

Ah, love, you stir: the spell is broke! But I,—
 What care I for our primal selves, when now
 I have the great calm joy to sit near by
 And rest my gaze upon your radiant brow!
 If all that has been never were, just this—
 To blend our souls in this dear present hour,
 To hear you speak, to breathe my reverent kiss—
 Were surely consummation's perfect flower.

Charles Henry Phelps.

FROM MY LETTER-BOX.

EVERY author who has enjoyed a few hours of popularity has seen his letter-box overflow with letters, anonymous or signed, which the publication of his books has called forth.

These literary effusions, like the articles and reviews in newspapers, are from critics of all shades, fair and unfair, kind and unkind, stupid and intelligent.

The author may refuse to take note of, or even resolve not to hear, what his critics say, but the chorus breaks out afresh on the appearance of each new work he gives to the world, and happy is he who can listen unmoved, and profit by it or laugh over it, as the case may demand. Great, high-strung natures there have been, like George Eliot, whose fine ears could not endure the bewildering trumpeting,—exquisite porcelain vases, that could scarce stand handling, much less kicks. Thomas Carlyle, himself a philosopher, once called the *Saturday Review* critics “dirty puppies.”

He who goes out into the public streets must expect a splash of mud now and then, and well for him if his broadcloth is not too fine: the spot dries, and—one fillip—it is gone.

“Criticism,” says D’Alembert, “should be received, if fair and kind, with deference and thanks; if fair but unkind, with deference and no thanks; if unfair and unkind, with silence and contempt.”

So much for criticism, public or private: that’s how I take it.

Undoubtedly the most entertaining critics are the private ones,—I mean if you be of a philosophic turn of mind. The contents of your crammed letter-box will afford you many an hour’s amusement. Your unknown correspondents have all sat down to write to you in grave earnest, that is the first thing which strikes you, and whatever your after-sentiments may be, the first is a feeling of gratification at having called forth the interest of them all. One corrects misstatements, another calls your attention to a printer’s error, another points out something that you have omitted and suggests a subject for your next book. One addresses you as “most noble and illustrious,” and asks for your autograph; the next (probably a social failure) puts a damper on your vanity with four pages of gross insults,—probably his way of avenging himself on Fate for the bad treatment he has received at her hands. Another— But extracts from some of the epistles that my own publications have called forth will best illustrate the subject, and I cannot do better than open my desk at once. So far from despising these letters, I keep most of them carefully and use them as wholesome physic, and occasionally take a dose of flattery or abuse, according as my state of depression or self-complacency may seem to require.

À tout seigneur tout honneur. I will begin by introducing the anonymous fanatic:

“Sir,—I have read your ‘John Bull and his Island.’ It is a pack of lies from beginning to end. Joanna Southcott was a true prophet-

ess, and no other than the woman of the desert spoken of by St. John in the Book of Revelations. Most of her prophecies have been fulfilled already, and the rest will be fulfilled all in God's good time. Beware of bringing down the anger of the Almighty on the sins of jeering and lying. Rest assured that you will cut a very small figure on the day of her resurrection."

Much in the same vein is the correspondent, wholly destitute of humor, who supplies the following: "You have sneered at all that we hold most sacred. We English are the chosen people of God, the lost tribes of Israel. I am only ashamed that a respectable English publisher should have been found ready to lend himself to the publication of such wickedness. I have no doubt you are preparing another book. Be careful what you say this time."

The next letter I find in the heap is written on the vilest paper. The ink is pale and rusty, the pen scratchy. In his furious hurry to relieve himself of his venom, the writer has caught his pen in the paper and covered it with a shower of little blots. For some time he hesitated as to whether he would post it; from its crumpled state it is even plain that he was on the point of throwing it on the fire, but passion got the better of reason, and the production found its way into my letter-box:

"Sir,—I have read your last. I should not have imagined that it was possible to write anything more stupid than 'John Bull et son Ile.' You have disappointed me: you have surpassed yourself. I sincerely hope you are emptied now. When I see all the French and English papers devoting columns of praise to your trash, I cannot help asking myself, 'What is the world coming to?' There are hundreds of Frenchmen residing in England who could have written much better books on the same subject, if the idea had only occurred to them."

The letter is in French, and the postmark London. Here there can be no mistake about the social position of the writer,—a Frenchman vegetating in London.

Another amiable compatriot is the one who sent me the following:

"It is said that your books bring you a hundred thousand francs a year. If such is the case, let me tell you that it is simply shameful that you should keep your professorship at St. Paul's, instead of resigning it and making room for one of the many Frenchmen in London who are as well fitted for the post as you are."

Strange that I should have resigned that professorship the very day I received this letter! Perhaps my worthy correspondent has boasted of bringing about my resignation. It was not *he*, however, who replaced me.

This letter is not only from a compatriot, but from a *confrère*. The writing is evidently disguised, and it would not surprise me to learn that it had come from a former friend. Why should he write thus? It would be hard to say. But it is a curious fact that individuals who have risen rapidly into any desirable position have always been the object of such attentions as this from old associates. These people are persuaded that their successful friend wants to turn his back on them, but in reality it is they who have changed. They were his warmly

appreciative audience when he had no public one; but let the public one sound his praises at all loudly, and they are immediately seized with a desire to rush out into the highways and proclaim that he is only plain "Jack," and not the "John" that his admirers think him,—that other "John" whom Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes was too modest to mention.

But let us return to the letter-box.

A Briton, who was not satisfied with my portraits of the John Bull family, wrote from London,—

"Your books on England are extremely clever and amusing, but they are as full of blunders as eggs are of meat."

Now, my dear friend, with your experience of London eggs, you could not pay me a more witty or graceful compliment.

One day I found in my letter-box an epistle the envelope of which was addressed to "John Bull, Esq., Cornhill, London." A post-office wag had written on the back, in blue pencil, "Not known: try Max O'Rell."

An anonymous wit supplied the following to my collection:

"You say that Englishmen have not the bump of amativeness, and that you never saw them pay to their wives those little attentions that are known in France by the name of *marivaudage* and in England by that of 'spooning.' But, my dear sir, does it not strike you that perhaps those provoking Britons waited until you had left their houses to proceed to business?"

This one "has" me, I will readily admit; but I think I "have" the lady correspondent who corrects a misstatement in "John Bull and his Island:"

"Sir,—You say in your book that a Society for the Protection of Women has not yet been formed in London. Allow me to say that you are mistaken. Such a society has been in existence for many years, and its seat is at 85, Strand."

So, after all, there existed in London a Society for the Protection of Women. Well, I was glad to hear it. And it has existed for years. Has it, indeed? You may easily imagine how little surprised I was the other day when, opening my English paper, I read that a magistrate in London had not hesitated to impose a fine of ten shillings upon a brute of a husband who had nearly smashed his wife's skull with a pair of tongs. I congratulate the Society for the Protection of Women which can inspire the magistrates of the big city with such terror. After so severe an example, few husbands will dare to open their wives' skulls for the mere purpose of ascertaining what there is inside of them. I heartily tender my most humble apologies to the Society for the Protection of Women.

Here is a batch of three. I hesitate to which to give the palm. Each is a rich illustration of the *sang-froid* and *sans-gêne* to be found in a certain type of Anglo-Saxon person all over the world. The first bears the postmark of a little town in Texas:

"My dear Sir,—I have an album containing the photographs of many illustrious men. I should much like to add yours to the number. If you will send it to me, I will send you mine."

Was not the offer tempting? I resisted it, however. The next illustrates the coolness of John Bull's head,—that coolness which, in England, goes by the name of "cheek." Judge for yourself:

"Dear Sir,—I am a great admirer of your books, and I should consider it a great favor if you would be kind enough to send me a copy of each of them, with your autograph. Hoping I am not presuming too much, I am, yours truly,
G. R."

No other enclosure! Well, well, my dear kind correspondent, I really cannot help thinking that it is presuming a little too much, and I must decline to give you a helping hand in putting into execution the plan you have discovered for getting up a library on the cheap.

To my mind, the third beats the preceding two into fits. Here it is in its delicious simplicity:

"I have heard that you were a most obliging man, and therefore I trust you will pardon the liberty I take. I should be grateful if, at your convenience, you would kindly write out for me: (1) the etymology of the following French words, *aube*, *jour*, *soir*, and *veillée*; (2) the French equivalents for the two following English sentences, 'I am at my wits' end,' and 'to turn over a new leaf'; (3) biographical sketches of Alphonse Daudet, Octave Feuillet, Émile Zola, and Georges Ohnet. With apologies for encroaching upon your valuable time, I am, Etc."

There was not even a stamped envelope accompanying this modest request. After reading it again, I felt much inclined to break through my rule of never answering such unknown correspondents. The glib request seemed to come from an old offender; I was certainly not the first who had been called upon to supplement his school education in this fashion. It was a great temptation to suggest one or two "new leaves" he might turn over with advantage, and keep turned.

I pass over several kinds of correspondents: those who simply ask for autographs or a sensible piece of information; those who thank "you for the pleasure derived from the perusal of your books," and hope "you may long be spared to show up the weaknesses of John Bull;" the Frenchman residing in England who sends a request for cash, saying that "it is a duty for compatriots on a foreign shore to help one another, and that the loan of a few pounds would be particularly acceptable just now."

Now *place aux dames*.

They are certainly the most piquant of my correspondents, and I get a good deal of amusement in speculating on their age, state, temper, station in life, etc. Here are a few samples of this kind of correspondence.

An anxious mother writes,—

"I have eight daughters. What would you advise me to do with them?"

Excuse me, dear madam, I am a married man, and I can only advise you to apply elsewhere for relief. But how old are your daughters? If they are still in pinafores, there is the system of plain diet and early hours pursued with success, I believe, by our old nursery acquaintance who lived in a shoe. But perhaps my first surmise was the correct

one, and, having many marriageable daughters, you are at a loss to know why men are not besieging your house for wives. Now, dear madam, let me ask you one or two questions. Have you judiciously trained your eight daughters? Have you been careful to have them taught all the *ologies*, the higher branches of science, and a smattering of half a dozen accomplishments? Have you carefully shielded their sensitive natures from all knowledge of the degrading trivialities of housekeeping? Have you duly inculcated in them a contempt for anything but the best style of dress, carriages, furniture, etc., and a lady-like indifference to the cost of the necessities of life? You have done all this? Well, poor madam, I am afraid I cannot do anything for you.

Mrs. "John Bull" writes the following indictment against her husband:

"I feel very grateful to you for the admirable way in which you have shown up the true position of woman in our country. Every Englishwoman ought to read your book '*Les Filles de John Bull*.' My husband was very averse to my doing so, but I read it all the same, and am very glad that I did. At last we have some one among us with wit to perceive that the life which a woman leads with the ordinary sherry-drinking, cigar-smoking English husband is little better than that of an Eastern slave. Take my own case, which is that of thousands in our land. I belong to my lord and master body and soul; the duties of a housekeeper, upper nurse, and governess are required of me; I am expected to be always at home and at my husband's beck and call. It is true that he feeds me, and that for his own glorification he provides me with handsome clothing. It is also true that he does not beat me. For this I ought, of course, to be properly grateful; but I often think of what you say on the wife and servant question, and wonder how many of us would like to share the cook's privilege of being able to give warning to leave. We have heard enough about the duty of training girls to be good wives and mothers. It is high time now that we should hear something about training boys to be decent husbands and tolerable fathers. Under the present system of education, they are taught from their cradle to despise girls as their inferiors, and the result is the semi-slavery of English wives which you have so ably depicted."

No doubt, my dear Mrs. John Bull, your husband thinks you such an ornament to his house that he cannot bear to know you outside it. Looked at properly, it may be taken as a delicate compliment. As for his expecting you to wear a smiling face, we must own that when a fellow comes home from a public dinner or a jolly evening at his club it is devilish hard upon him to find his wife with a long face, suffering from a fit of the blues.

A lady signing herself "*A Neglected Wife*" pours out her little troubles to me in a long letter, complaining that she has to spend nearly all her evenings alone while her husband is dining, drinking, and card-playing at his club, and concludes by saying, "I had the reputation of being a good-tempered girl, but the life I have to lead now would sour an angel." This poor little woman had better beware how

she shows sourness at her husband's coming home at one o'clock in the morning, or he will soon make the discovery that he comes at one o'clock *because* she is sour. Men have powerful reasoning minds.

The next letter is a model of neatness and precision. The writing is bold and angular; so is the style. There is a perfume of the woman's-righter about the missive, which runs thus:

"Monsieur,—You say that 'when men do not marry it is for want of an inclination,' but that 'when women do not marry it is for want of an invitation.' Allow me to tell you that you have indulged in wit at the expense of truth: you are entirely mistaken as to a woman's reason. I myself have had several offers, but, thanks be, the ample means left me by careful parents have placed me above the necessity of getting a living in the mill of matrimony. Man is a beast, a sensual and selfish creature, utterly incapable of understanding the sensitive, refined soul of a true woman, and I am happy to say that I am one of the many who mean to do without his companionship."

I imagine that few bachelors will regret to hear of this lady's determination.

A lively daughter of John Bull writes,—

"Several young friends and myself have been speculating as to what you are like, whether you are young or old, plain or good-looking, tall or short, married or single. We scarcely dare hope that you will satisfy our curiosity by replying to this letter, but if you have a photograph of yourself to spare, it would settle our minds greatly."

I hardly see how my photograph would tell whether I am tall or short, married or single, and, reflecting that photographs are apt to be faithful reproductions of one's features, I prefer not to send mine to these young ladies, who have perhaps enshrined me in their imagination as an Adonis.

A Frenchman from Paris suggests a little business:

"Monsieur and dear Confrère,—I am a man of most fertile imagination. I have scores of plots which, worked by you in your inimitable style, would produce no end of absorbing novels. There is a fortune for us both if you will only join me. Please think it over seriously, and let me know your decision at your earliest convenience."

Declined with thanks.

One of the English publishers who applied to me for the right of issuing an English edition of "*John Bull et son Ile*" made me the following handsome offer:

"Sir,—I believe that an English translation of the book you have just published in France would be likely to have a sale in England. I am ready to give you £16 for the right of translation. An early answer will oblige."

Declined without thanks.

But, oh, if I could only have had such a brilliant offer from an American publisher! From this quarter I never had any: they took French leave. I went so far as to write to one of the publishers who did me the honor of introducing me to the American public that I had heard he had published an edition of my book, and suggested the sending of a little check by way of acknowledgment. As an inducement

to him to comply with my request, I promised not to spend the money, not even to cash the check. I had determined that, if ever I got it, it should go into my scrap-book of literary curiosities; but the check never came. I will tell you, however, how I was lucky enough to make five dollars by the transaction: I had bet twenty-five francs with a friend that the check would never come.

A lady, signing "A niece of Uncle Sam," wrote to me the following note from Boston:

"I have just read your second book. If I could not write better English than that, I would never think of sending my manuscript to a publisher."

You are quite right to abuse such English, my dear lady, but you have sent your letter to the wrong man; you should have addressed it rather to the publisher who, without a *by your leave* or *with your leave*, one night set thirty scribblers, all more or less ignorant of French, hacking away at my prose, with instructions to have the book done by next morning. It was done, done brown, as you have seen, much to the consternation of yours truly, I can assure you.

Here is an appeal to use my influence on behalf of the oppressed:

"Dear Sir,—There is an enormous sum of money in the English Court of Chancery to which I am entitled. I am constantly writing to the judges of that court to claim my property, but can obtain no answer to any of my letters. It is very hard to be living in poverty and want and to know that I have riches belonging to me which I cannot handle. I appeal to you to use your influence to get my rightful property. I hope you will do what you can for me."

A request to send my answer to Mrs. Dash, Insane Hospital, Indianapolis, threw much light on the strange epistle, and I thought it wise, on the whole, not to trouble the judges of the Chancery Court.

Among the letters which have given me most pleasure is one signed with a name well known in diplomatic circles. From it I extract the following remark:

"What pleases me about your books on England is that one has only to scrape away the sprinkling of sarcasm on the surface in order to come upon a true appreciation of John Bull's solid qualities, and he must be a very dull fellow the Englishman who does not laugh with you over his little weaknesses and eccentricities."

Yes, thanks be, it is not only amusement that an author gets from his stranger correspondents. Among his sweetest moments are those spent in the reading of letters from friends whose faces he has never seen and may never see. They speak of the pleasure, and sometimes the profit, their writers have had in reading him, and they are glowing with encouragement, thanks, and often kind and valuable hints. He would like to reply to every one of them, but it is out of his power to do this. Write again, dear unseen friends, help me with your kindly criticisms, encourage me with your discriminating praise: it is for such as you that the author would fain do better than his best.

What kind and graceful letters, for instance, did I receive from Englishmen, a while ago, begging me to excuse, as a penalty of success, a certain book-trade speculation, purporting to be a reply to "John

Bull et son Ile," but which was in reality a minute study of all the low resorts its writer had visited in Paris—for the edification of his compatriots, of course, and which he had presented to those compatriots as a picture of French life.

But letters are not the only form in which criticism reaches you through your letter-box. There are the newspaper cuttings posted to you by your publisher, and an occasional stray newspaper which a *kind friend* slips into the mail, in the hope that its slashing blows at your new-born may act as a wholesome corrective to your vanity.

First of all, let me introduce the critic who reviews books without reading them.

When my last book, "L'Ami MacDonald," appeared in Paris a few weeks ago, the London and Paris newspapers published extracts from it the following day. Shortly after, an ingenuous critic, not coming across any mention of Mary Stuart among these extracts, ventured the opinion that "it was strange for a Frenchman to write a book on Scotland and not devote a few pages to the unfortunate queen." After a few other remarks equally astonishing, he gravely winds up with this delicious bit of unconscious humor:

"The volume is bright and entertaining: unfortunately, the author is apt to jump to hasty conclusions."

Is he, indeed? But you are not: if you had read the book, you would have seen a whole chapter devoted to the Queen of Scots.

The next will show you that a little knowledge of French is not out of place in a reviewer of French books. Here is actually a critic on the staff of that most pretentious of papers, the *Saturday Review*, who does not know the meaning of the French expression "*raison sociale*." He quotes a passage of mine, in which he comes across the words, and, turning up his nose at it, gives it up, saying, "Whatever this may mean." Surely it is a little too bad of this man to blame me for not bringing down my French to the level of his comprehension. What is a poor French author to do? I tried to meet the difficulty, and I suggested to my Paris publisher that it would be worth our while to supplement my next book with a French-English vocabulary for the use of the *Saturday Reviewer*.

From another batch of papers I extract the following, which is no doubt meant as a graceful compliment. The reviewer winds up his criticism of a book of mine by saying,—

"Max O'Rell is a typical Frenchman, but a man who has been considerably improved by a long residence in England."

Now, dear American reader, don't you think that if I could only be induced to stay a year or two in America I might have a fair chance of becoming perfect?

Having boldly shown you the seamy as well as the sweet contents of my letter-box, let me give you one of the latest additions to my stock of "pick-me-ups." It is a cutting from the Plymouth *Mercury*, and came to me in a letter from Europe only a few days ago:

"It is fashionable among Englishmen to ridicule and jeer at the prevalence of duelling among our lively French neighbors; but there are few of those combats of so repulsive a character as that in which

the pugilists Jem Smith and Kilrain were engaged. The show was degrading and beastly beyond expression. It is a thousand pities that Max O'Rell is not at home. How delicious would have been his incisive satire, as he described the one hundred and six bouts during which Jem Smith was *knocked silly* and Kilrain *severely punished*, and at the close of which they embraced each other and swore eternal friendship!"

Stop, stop, Mr. Editor: you make me blush. But what would you say if you knew that your American *confrères* requested their English correspondents to cable them two columns a day on the slightest movements of the bruisers?

Let me finish by giving you some criticisms that I have coupled and stuck side by side in my scrap-book.

(1) On the relations between France and England:

Says *London Society*, "Max O'Rell has done more to laugh away international prejudices than any living writer."

Says a little Suffolk paper, "We take exception to Max O'Rell's books, because they are calculated to increase ill feelings between England and France."

(2) On women:

Says the *London Standard*, "Max O'Rell has a keener insight into the character of women than the majority of English novelists."

Says the *St. James's Gazette*, "Max O'Rell's new book is teeming with true observations and witticisms, but when he speaks of English-women he shows a lamentable ignorance of his subject."

(3) On your humble servant:

Says the *London Figaro*, "Max O'Rell may still call himself a Frenchman; but he now belongs to England more than to France. We cannot do without him."

Says the *Scotsman*, "Max O'Rell is steadily growing to be a public nuisance in this country."

It must be pretty evident to my readers by this time that an author who took *au sérieux* every criticism addressed to him would be in a fair way of graduating for a lunatic asylum. There are but two plans for him to choose from: either to make up his mind to ignore his critics entirely, or to adopt the philosophical one of making them provide him with instruction and amusement, and, in the words of Figaro in Beaumarchais's celebrated "*Barbier de Séville*," "go on his way unconcerned, blamed here, praised there, and ready to laugh at all around."

Max O'Rell.

FEAR.

A TIMID Pain came tapping at life's door;
Nor stalwart thief could make me tremble more:
For, in far distance where I could not see,
A longed-for Joy was travelling to me.

Charlotte Fluke Bates.

WITH GAUGE & SWALLOW.*

NO. III.—A RETAINER IN CUPID'S COURT.

THERE is no place like a lawyer's office for taking the conceit out of a man and teaching him that he knows very little about anything and nothing at all about what a lawyer is supposed to know most,—human nature. Men who sit in the library, or the counting-house even, and look at humanity through plate-glass windows, are apt to be very positive in their opinions on this subject. It is a favorite idea with mental philosophers, novelists, political economists, and dreamers of all sorts, that human nature is always the same. The lawyer knows that the rule of contraries is quite as often the key to its mysterious action.

He sees day by day the wise man doing what a fool should have sense enough to avoid; the tenderest-hearted committing acts which put to shame the brutality of the most debased; the innocent showing every sign of guilt and the guilty wearing the guileless air of innocence; the most wary doing the most imprudent things; the shrewdest displaying the most amazing credulity; the most transparent frauds deceiving the most astute; the most well-meaning committing the most atrocious crimes:—in fact, human nature showing itself to be just what those who claim to know most about the article are ready to swear that it is not.

So he comes to regard right and wrong, sanity and insanity, reason and unreason, as merely relative terms, as far as motive and inclination are concerned. The drama of life, as he sees it, is so startling in its intensity and variety that he regards its tragedies and comedies as mere matter-of-course events, which are of no significance except as guide-boards to indicate the line of his duty. He is not unsympathetic,—in fact, he is usually the very reverse,—but his sympathy is held in check by his judgment, and his confidence by the knowledge that few men can tell the exact truth even in that confessional where self-interest most strongly impels to verity,—a consultation with one's legal adviser. He expects his client to lie to him, and only believes what he may say when he has fully tested his capacity for truth-telling.

No man understood this better than our Mr. Swallow. It was natural, therefore, that a cynical smile should play about his lips when one morning the office-boy rushed into his presence as if shot from a catapult and placed upon the desk before him a letter and a card, exclaiming, breathlessly,—

"To see Mr. Swallow—upon *important business!*"

He knew the rascal had loitered through the outer room worrying the clerks as it is the nature of the *gamin* to do, and was now indulging in mild ridicule of the feeling every client has, that his own

affair is one of overshadowing importance, not only to himself, but also to his legal adviser.

Mr. Swallow read the letter, while the watchful boy twisted his legs about each other and purloined a pencil, an adhesive seal, and some other small articles from the desk. The letter was on commercial paper, having the printed heading

FIELD, ORD & FIELD,
CARPETS.

The card read,—

Mr. Frank Field.

"Show him in," said Mr. Swallow, sharply, as he laid the letter on his desk.

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, with innocent promptness, as he pocketed the trifles he had filched.

He soon returned with a young man, for whom he pushed a chair to the side of Mr. Swallow's desk.

"Mr. Field, I suppose?" said the Junior, turning towards him after the boy had gone. His elbows rested on the arms of his revolving chair, his head was bent forward, his fingers loosely interlocked, while he scanned the young man as if he had been a witness who was trying to dodge the truth.

"Yes, sir. You know our firm, I think?"

"I know its rating," said Mr. Swallow, sententiously.

The young man bowed at what he deemed a compliment. Mr. Swallow would have said the same thing of any firm in the country. He was a walking Bradstreet, and proud of the fact. Now, however, he was studying his man and unconscious of the flattering construction that had been put on his words.

"You have only recently become a partner, I believe?"

"A little more than a year ago."

"It used to be Field, Haskell & Ord, if I remember rightly?"

"Yes; Mr. Haskell died just after he withdrew,—about two years ago."

"I had a case for them once,—a good many years ago. I have not met your father since, but remember him very pleasantly."

Still the lawyer's face did not relax, and his voice had a repellent tone which did not escape his hearer's notice.

"You have read his letter?" he asked, uneasily.

"Yes, and, while I should be happy to serve him, I may as well say to you at the outset that I do not think we can take your business." Mr. Swallow looked at the young man with compassionate decision as he spoke.

"Indeed?" said his listener, anxiously. "May I inquire why not?"

"Well, you see, Mr. Field," said the Junior, pursing up his mouth and looking out of the window meditatively, "if it was actual *business*,

there would be no hesitation. We are business lawyers, and always ready for business; but we try to keep out of the police courts, and especially seek to avoid every sort of case that has a woman in it. If a regular client gets into trouble of that kind we stand by him, of course; but we don't hanker after that sort of practice, you understand."

"But there is nothing discreditable——" began the would-be client.

"Oh, certainly not," interrupted the lawyer, with a little outward fling of the hands and a shrug that almost buried his head in the massive shoulders on which it rested. "Nobody ever thinks *his* business is discreditable to his attorneys. Gauge & Swallow have a reputation, however, that has to be maintained. Do you see the names on those boxes there?" motioning to a row of tin cases that adorned the sides of the vault whose door stood open at his right. "We could not keep such names on our list of clients if we were mixed up in all sorts of questionable affairs. I understand from your father's letter that you want our advice about a woman who has disappeared. Now, we don't deal in divorces, nor manufacture evidence, nor persecute women. We sometimes defend criminals, but we never devise crime nor aid in carrying out criminal schemes. You have come to the wrong shop, young man. The only advice we could give you would be to stand up to the rack. If you have made a fool of yourself, grin and bear it; but don't try to use the law to throw the burden of your folly or your meanness on another, especially a woman."

The Junior straightened himself up and threw the young man's card into his lap with a look of angry contempt as he concluded. The honor of the firm is as the apple of his eye to the great advocate, and his sense of justice is so keen as to amount almost to a passion.

"But I don't want a divorce, nor do I wish to do any wrong, nor to procure it to be done," answered the young man, with some confusion, but with unmistakable resentment.

"What do you want, then?" asked the lawyer, incredulously.

"I want to find a friend,—a lady who has suddenly disappeared,—dropped out of the world, as one might say."

"And when you have found her, then what?" still incredulously.

"That depends——" said Field, hesitantly.

"Oh, it does?" interrupted Mr. Swallow. "Don't tell me another word. I know the whole story, and don't want to hear any more about it."

"But you shall hear," said his listener, angrily, starting from his chair. "I don't care whether you take the case or not, but I am not going to submit to your insinuations longer. I came here at my father's express desire. He said you were a just man and would advise me honestly. I was willing to put myself in your hands and do whatever you thought an honorable man should do; but I can't stand such imputations."

"Is the woman your wife?" asked the lawyer, imperturbably.

"I don't know," half defiantly.

"Oh, you don't?" with a sneer. "You were deceived, inveigled, betrayed into a form of marriage, I suppose? Or is it the stale old

story of a mock marriage turning out a real one? At any rate, you are no doubt an innocent victim of a woman's wiles."

"I am not a victim, and do not pretend to be innocent," said the other, doggedly.

"You don't? Well, you *are* an anomaly. Sit down and let me look at you again. If you could find the lady now, you would be glad to make her your wife, I suppose, assuming that she is not legally so already, endow her with your earthly goods, and clothe her with all marital privileges?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure."

"Indeed! But how about your father? He speaks of it as a disgraceful affair."

"He means upon *my* part, not upon the lady's."

"And he would be willing you should marry the—lady?"

"He threatens me with his disfavor if I do not."

"The devil! That's a new feature. Why didn't you tell me that before?"

"You wouldn't let me tell you anything."

"Well, there's something in that," said Mr. Swallow, with his characteristic chuckle. "You say you want to find a woman who may be your wife or ought to be, whom, if not already such, you desire to make so, and whom your father and family are willing to receive."

"Exactly."

"Were you the cause of her disappearance?"

"I suppose so," said the young man, confusedly.

"See here, Mr. Field," said Mr. Swallow, jocosely, "I don't see how we can help you. We can't do your courting for you nor make up a lovers' quarrel."

"You can help me to find the lady and advise me what to do afterwards," said the other, smiling at the lawyer's jest.

"We are not detectives, Mr. Field."

"But you can employ detectives."

"So can you, for that matter."

"Not without compromising one who has suffered too much already by my stupidity."

"You think so?" said Mr. Swallow, meditatively, adding, after a moment, "Well, I don't know, Mr. Field; it's out of our line, but if you have a mind to tell me the whole matter from the beginning, not mentioning names, of course, if the story seems probable, and I think we can be of service to you, we—that is, I will talk with Mr. Gauge about it. If we don't undertake the business there will be no harm done."

The young man bowed assent to these conditions. Mr. Swallow touched his bell.

"I shall be engaged for half an hour," he said to the boy who answered his call.—"Now go on, Mr. Field. Make your story as short as you can, but tell it all; don't hide anything."

"I have no wish to do so," was the reply.

After a moment's silence, the young man proceeded:

"It was three years ago, that a young lady, the daughter of one of

our neighbors, was placed in my care to escort to some Western relatives she wished to visit. She was a mere girl, not more than fifteen or sixteen, though she appeared several years older. I had known her from childhood, and was exceedingly fond of her. Being a good ten years older, I can hardly be said to have been a suitor. Even when a child, however, I had called her my little sweetheart, and she had vowed over and over again with infantile *abandon* that she would never marry any one but me. Our country-place adjoined her father's residence, and the families were on terms of intimacy. Though her father's circumstances were rather straitened, her education had not been neglected. It was not then completed, which was perhaps the reason why I had never thought of her except as a school-girl.

"I was travelling for the house then, having a couple of Western States assigned to me which I was required to canvass every spring and autumn. The relatives she was to visit lived in one of these States, and it was the most natural thing in the world that she should be placed in my care to make the journey. She had never been away from home before; and I suppose, if the truth were known, it was the attraction of reduced rates on excursion-tickets that led her parents to allow her to go. I am sure she would not have been permitted to do so except with one in whom they had the utmost confidence. It was arranged that she should buy a ticket to the Falls and return: at that point she was to get 'a scalper's' ticket to the Western city near her destination, and on her return to sell, at the same place, the unused coupons of a round-trip ticket she would purchase at the West. This compelled a stop at the Falls, going and returning, but made the trip a very inexpensive one, and this delay was not regarded as any hardship by a young girl who had never seen the mist of Niagara. I am careful to explain these things, sir, in order that you may understand that what afterwards occurred was not of my planning.

"We had intended to pass through New York without stopping more than a few hours; but, as luck would have it, when we reached the junction the train from the North had brought a maiden aunt of mine who lived up in the Berkshire Hills, on her way to the metropolis. When a boy I had passed one or two summers under her roof, but, as there was not the very best of feeling between her and my mother, there had been very little intercourse between her and the family since. I had visited her once or twice, and every Christmas sent her a present and received in return a letter expressive of the warmest and tenderest affection. Thus I was the sole medium of communication between her and our family.

"I had jokingly promised that when I married I would bring my bride to visit her upon our wedding-journey, of which fact she never failed to remind me when she wrote. She was a most excellent lady, and, except her attachment for me and a pretty large share of curiosity, had hardly a foible. I recognized her as soon as she entered the car, and went forward to take her bundles, intending to give her a place in the double seat we had taken. As I turned back from greeting my relative, it flashed upon me for the first time that my companion had grown from a very pretty girl into a beautiful woman. I knew then

that I had loved her ever since I could remember, almost, and somehow felt that she had the same feeling for me. I noticed that her light-gray travelling-suit with the silvery veil knotted at her throat gave her a very bride-like appearance, and thought with quiet pleasure that I would some time take a journey with her in a nearer relation. She rose as I returned with my aunt and stood with her hand half extended, awaiting an introduction. I suppose some exclamation I had made informed her who it was that I had recognized. My aunt flashed one glance at this charming picture and jumped to a startling conclusion which she announced in tones audible to the whole car.

"Ah, you naughty boy!" she exclaimed. "Didn't you promise to bring your wife to see me on your bridal trip?"

"For the life of me I could not help blushing. My companion's face was all aflame, but her eyes sought mine with a look of amused confidence. More to relieve her embarrassment than my own, I said, as I tried to induce my garrulous relative to sit down,—

"Oh, I hadn't forgotten you, auntie: we were coming your way on the return trip."

"I don't believe it, sir!" she exclaimed, in half-assumed anger. "You didn't think a word about me. I never got an invitation, nor a piece of cake, nor had any intimation of the matter at all. Though," she added, as if she would give me a chance to excuse my neglect, "I've been away from home pretty near a month, and might have missed it if it had been sent."

"We were standing in the middle of the car. The passengers were inspecting us with that kindly curiosity always bestowed upon a bridal party. I wished the train would start or my loud-voiced relative be struck dumb. Neither event seemed likely to occur. What could I do but humor the good woman's self-deception? I could not bawl out to that car-load of spectators that we were not bride and groom; that we were only acquaintances,—friends. Our flushed faces betrayed us, and their kindly interest would have turned to unkindly ridicule had I done so. I could only answer as I did, in as careless a tone as I could command:

"That's the reason. You'll find everything will turn up O. K. on your return."

"My aunt looked at me doubtfully.

"I don't know about believing you," she said. "A man is apt to forget everything but himself at such a time.—Is he telling the truth?" she asked, turning suddenly to my companion. "Did he ever speak of me?"

"How grateful I felt when the blushing girl answered, in tones more composed than I could have imagined possible,—

"Oh, certainly: I feel quite well acquainted with you. You are Aunt Keziah, are you not?"

"Of course I am," said the delighted spinster, her doubts now wholly removed. "And what is your name, dear?"

"My companion murmured her given name, and my relative embraced her with great effusion. I looked about the car to see if any of my acquaintances were aboard to witness my discomfiture. Not a single

familiar face! Then I remembered that it was afternoon, and I was accustomed to come into the city on the early morning train. I felt relieved, thinking I could easily undeceive my fond old relative when opportunity offered.

"‘Sit down, auntie,’ I said, gayly, as the train started, making room for her on the seat beside my friend.

"‘No, no,’ she remonstrated, ‘I shan’t sit there. I couldn’t think of separating young married people. Besides that, I want you both where I can look at you. I declare, Frank, it makes me real glad. I never thought you could persuade such a refined and handsome lady to take pity on a confirmed old bachelor.—There, there, don’t blush, my dear! Every one knows you are handsome, and every one knows, too, that you are a bride.—Really, Frank, I don’t blame you. I think I am in love with her myself already.’

"This and much more we had to face on the way to the city. I could not tell the good lady of her mistake without taking all the people in the car into our confidence and unnecessarily mortifying my aunt, of whom I was really very fond. My companion appreciated my dilemma, and helped me with a ready tact that inspired my gratitude and confirmed my love. But there was even worse to come. Learning that we were to go to Chicago *via* Niagara Falls, she announced her intention to make us her guests until our departure. As she could not receive us at home, she would at least make us the recipient of a sort of hospitality in the city. She informed us also that she was herself on her way to Oregon to take charge of the family of a deceased relative, and would go on with us the next day if we would wait. She had sold the old homestead, she said, and very probably we would never see her again. This, of course, made it impossible to refuse her kindness, as no good reason could be given for doing so. Besides, I was not unwilling to prolong a journey which offered such delightful opportunity to enjoy the society of the woman I had just learned to love.

"Though not a woman one would expect to meet in society, my aunt knew the hotels of the metropolis, and was known of them. I had to look after the baggage on our arrival, and there was no chance to explain the mistake until we reached the hotel. Here she waved us authoritatively to the waiting-room, while she stepped to the clerk’s desk and registered. It did not occur to me for a minute in what a dilemma we might be placed. To tell the truth, I was so glad to be alone a moment with my new-found love that I could think of little else. When I did recover my wits and rushed out to the desk, the mischief was done. None but a bridegroom was ever met with such a look of commiserating condescension as the clerk bestowed upon me. It was as unmistakable as my aunt’s proud smile. Edging up to the register, I saw the entry, ‘Mr. Frank Field & Wife,’ in my aunt’s rather formidable chirography. There was no mistaking its import, however. A room had been assigned to her, and another to the supposed bridal couple. All I could do was to manœuvre for another still. This I secured by telling my aunt that I had telegraphed for a friend to meet me, to whom I must send a messenger, as I had intended to dine at another hotel. As I had some business with him, I informed

her that I should ask him to stay and go with us to the theatre. So I secured the key to a room adjoining those already assigned, and that difficulty was tided over without a scene."

"Did the girl know of the registration?"

"Not at the time."

"While you were at the hotel, I mean."

"I told her that night between the acts at the theatre."

"Of course!" growled Mr. Swallow. "Let a man alone for being a fool, whenever he gets a chance! Go on."

It is curious how quickly a lawyer comes to identify himself with the client whose interest he has espoused.

"It happened," continued Field, "that my aunt's preference in the matter of hotels did not correspond with mine, so that I met nobody whom I knew."

"I suppose you made no new acquaintances?"

"My aunt did introduce us to several people."

"As Mr. and Mrs. Field, I suppose?"

"Yes. You see, I couldn't——"

"Don't stop to excuse yourself!" savagely. "Go on."

"Nothing more happened worth mentioning until we reached the Falls."

"There you registered again in the same way, I suppose?"

"Yes. I was afraid to do otherwise, lest my garrulous relative should get us into trouble."

"Certainly. One lie makes a man a coward for ever afterwards. Did the girl know it this time?"

"Yes, I explained to her before we arrived just how I was situated."

"And she assented?"

"I suppose so. She did not object."

"Did she say anything about it?"

"Well, yes: the next day when I apologized for the awkwardness of the situation and said I hoped she would allow me to accompany her some time on a real wedding journey, she granted my request, but said, with shy solemnity, that it seemed to her as if we were married already."

"So you were!" exclaimed Mr. Swallow. "Talk about a woman's instinct! You were a man of the world, she an unpractised child, but she knew you were married, while you never dreamed you had assumed a husband's responsibility. Ten to one she kept herself thenceforward from all others, as if the sacrament of the church had hallowed your union."

"She did," continued the young man, humbly. "We bade my aunt good-by in Chicago," he continued, "went to a hotel, and resumed our proper characters; drove about the city until the time for our train, and were happier—at least I was—than I had ever been before."

"Well, what next?"

"She returned about a month afterwards."

"You made it convenient to come with her, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"And you registered at the Falls again as man and wife?"

"I did not dare risk doing otherwise."

"Of course; you are not the first coward. Well?"

"She went back to school, and I saw her but seldom. After Mr. Haskell's death I went abroad."

"You gave no explanation to any one?"

"No."

"You announced your engagement to her parents?"

"I am sorry to say we did not."

"You corresponded, of course?"

"Yes."

"How did you address her,—in your letters, I mean?"

"As a lover naturally would, I suppose," said Field, blushing furiously.

"No, you didn't!" exclaimed Swallow, fiercely. "You addressed her as your wife. Didn't you, now? Don't dodge!"

"I don't wish to, sir. I did, though it was only a jesting allusion to our queer adventure."

"Of course; you didn't mean anything. A man never does when he is in love. What did the girl do? Did she follow your example and address you as her husband? I'll stake odds she didn't."

"She used my Christian name,—or a dash."

"My dear—blank, I suppose you mean?"

The young man nodded.

"I vow!" said Mr. Swallow, springing to his feet. "You stir my admiration for her good sense. A blank may mean anything or nothing. It is a hieroglyph, to be construed according to the context and—circumstances. Well, what next? Really, this is growing interesting."

"A few months ago my aunt returned from Oregon——"

"Whew!" whistled the lawyer. "And you?"

"I was coming home by way of Constantinople and Egypt, and knew nothing of it. No one knew where to address me, and I have only just arrived. Her father was very angry with her, and very violent, refusing to listen to any explanation; denounced me to my parents, sold everything he had, and sailed for Europe. His daughter went on board the steamer with her parents, but after it sailed could not be found."

"Dead?" asked Swallow, in a horrified tone.

"I do not think so," said Field, growing pale nevertheless. "On my return I received a letter from her, asking me to be content with what I had done, and not insult her by thinking of her again."

"Where was it mailed?"

"It was forwarded by her father from London."

"Does he know her whereabouts?"

"I think not. He refuses to hold any communication at all with me, however: so I am not sure."

"Well?"

"That is all."

"And you want——?"

"First of all, to find this lady," handing Mr. Swallow a photograph. "Next, to know what relation I sustain to her."

"The last is easily told, Mr. Field. Having acknowledged her as your wife, you cannot, according to the law of this State, avoid the responsibility of the relation you assumed. The law presumes the contract of marriage from its acknowledgment,—so far as the man is concerned, at least. How far the lady would be bound is not very clear. For obvious reasons, probably not to the same extent. In this case, she could no doubt sue you for maintenance, obtain a divorce for cause, recover alimony for desertion, and would unquestionably be entitled to dower in case of your death. At the same time, she could probably avoid the presumption as to herself, if she should choose, by pleading that she was inexperienced, deceived, or overawed, and any jury would believe her. Legally, therefore, you are in this predicament: she may at any time claim you as her husband, while you cannot claim her as your wife. If she were inclined to be obstinate you might find yourself in for a most unpleasant criminal charge, as well as an action sounding in damages. I do not look for either of these, however, from what you tell me of her character. Now, what do you propose to do?"

"Simply to acknowledge the fact,—admit myself legally her husband, and seek to be recognized by her as such, if she will permit."

"Do you understand that to do so would be to bind yourself irrevocably? Marriage once fully admitted is indissoluble except by decree of a court, which can be secured only for cause."

"So I supposed."

"Had you not better wait until you find her and learn her feelings towards you?"

"I have already delayed doing justice too long."

"But how will you do it? You cannot publish what you have told me from the house-tops."

"I can write on her portrait, 'This is my wife,' sign my name to it, and send it to all who know her. That will silence her detractors at least," said the young man, impetuously.

"That is an idea," replied the lawyer, thoughtfully. After a moment he added, "Come and see me to-morrow at three o'clock. In the mean time I will consult Mr. Gauge and decide on some course of action,—that is, if we conclude to take the case," he added, cautiously.

"I hope you will, Mr. Swallow," said the young man, earnestly.

"Well, we shall see," replied the Junior, chuckling, as he bowed his visitor out.

Mr. Swallow sauntered into the Senior's room when his client had withdrawn, rubbing his hands together complacently.

"Well, Gauge," he said, jocularly, "I've undertaken the queerest job just now this firm has ever had in hand."

"What is that?" asked the Senior.

"Simply to overthrow one of the oldest maxims of the law."

"Which one of the ancient landmarks do you propose to obliterate now, you inveterate iconoclast?" asked the Senior, smiling up at his robust associate.

"*Consensus facit matrimonium*," was the oracular response.

"I must confess I don't see how we can dispense with that maxim

just now. As long as marriage is a part of our law, that is a bit of Littleton which I think will stand," responded the other.

"Well, I have engaged—subject to your approval, of course—to maintain a marriage to which neither party consented, and which was never consummated; and you've got to help me, old fellow."

"It can't be done," said Mr. Gauge, confidently.

Then Mr. Swallow narrated briefly what he had learned.

"What is the lady's name?" asked his partner, quietly.

"Really," said Mr. Swallow, in confusion, "I was so interested in the case, and so absorbed in wondering what you would think of it, that I didn't inquire."

Mr. Gauge looked up over his glasses at the blushing Junior, and said, good-naturedly,—

"That's about the last thing one would expect from you."

Then they both laughed heartily. Different as they are in character, the most cordial relations have always existed between the two great lawyers.

"I've got her likeness, anyhow," said Mr. Swallow, going back to his desk and returning with the photograph. Mr. Gauge examined it carefully.

"You say her father started for Europe and she left the vessel after they went on board? Such things do not happen every day. When did this occur?"

"Really, I—I did not learn," stammered the Junior, blushing again like a school-boy.

"Indeed!" said the Senior: "one would hardly expect you to be so susceptible,—at your age, too."

Then they laughed again. They understood each other thoroughly, and could afford to laugh at each other's foibles.

"I suppose you know whether it was this year or last?"

"Oh, this year,—only a short time ago."

"Well, now, I wonder if we are not both at work on the same job! I wish I knew," said the Senior, thoughtfully.

He looked at the photograph a moment, touched his bell quickly, and said to the boy who answered it,—

"Ask Mr. Fountain to come here."

A moment after I stood before him, inquiring what might be his pleasure.

"Do you know who that is?" he asked, thrusting the photograph before me.

I suppose I must have exhibited some confusion, for he asked, impatiently,—

"Well, who is it?"

"I may be mistaken, sir, but I don't think I am."

"Pshaw! Don't you know that a man may mistake a face, but never a photograph? One may fail to recognize a portrait, but if he does recognize it he is never mistaken. Who is it, now?"

"I should say—it was Miss Florence Cadmus."

"Just as I thought!" shouted the Senior. "We'll take the case, Mr. Swallow.—That will do, Mr. Fountain. Much obliged."

I went back to my desk, wondering what had interested the firm so greatly in a young lady who had come to hold quite a prominent place in my dreams.

I was excessively troubled as I smoked my cigar in my humble lodgings that night. Professor Cadmus's commendation of my handwriting and an opportunity to study his methods had led me to seek to improve myself in the art of penmanship by assiduous practice, with the idea of making my unemployed evenings contribute something to my exchequer. That very day I had started to put my plan into execution by advertising to give private lessons. All day I had been on nettles lest my associates should discover my secret. Now I opened the *Herald* to see how my advertisement looked. As I did so, my eye fell upon an announcement just above and completely overshadowing mine:

Temple of Chirographic Art,
Corner — Street and Broadway.

All styles of handwriting taught by a teacher having ten years of training under Professor Cadmus.

Address Miss Estelle Florence, Sec.

"The Temple of Chirographic Art"! It was one of the professor's pet ideas! Who could Miss Estelle Florence be? All at once it flashed upon me.

"Florence Estelle Cadmus?" I said to myself. What did it all mean? I knew the professor had gone abroad, and I had seen his daughter's likeness canvassed by the heads of the firm that day. Did it mean anything to her prejudice or something to her advantage? At any rate, she ought to know the facts which had come to my knowledge; and I determined to lose no time in acquainting her with them.

The next morning on my way to the office I called at the "Temple of Chirographic Art." It was exactly the professor's ideal of such a school,—the fourth story of a large building which seemed to have been made on purpose for it,—a dozen small rooms, with one large one in front. I saw through the half-open door that all were well furnished, not with desks, but with small tables and chairs. The front room had also a blackboard. Knocking at the door of the secretary's office, I was bidden to enter in a voice I could not mistake, though I hardly recognized the lady who rose to welcome me.

The massive coil of hair I had so greatly admired had disappeared, and, in its stead, short clustering curls adorned the comely head. Her eyes were bright and her cheeks flushed as she gave me a hearty greeting:

"Why, Mr. Fountain, I did not expect to see you so soon! When did you get my letter?"

"Letter?" I had received none, and so stated.

A few words explained everything that needed explanation. She had left her parents on the eve of their departure for Europe, owing to a misunderstanding with her father; had gone to friends who sheltered her during a severe illness and loaned her money for her present venture, which she had undertaken under an assumed name to save herself from

being talked about. She had written me on seeing my advertisement the day before, both because she feared I might suspect her identity and to ascertain if she could secure my services as a teacher, evenings.

Then I told her what had induced my visit. She listened quietly, asked a few questions, but offered no explanation. When I had finished she said,—

“Mr. Fountain, I want a friend who will serve me faithfully, ask no questions, and never doubt, whatever may occur. Will you be that friend?”

There was no hint of embarrassment in her voice or manner. I knew such a friend would never be anything more to her; but I accepted. Somehow I felt that she needed protection, and was glad to have her look to me for it. Such enterprises as the Temple of Chirographic Art were not often undertaken by women in those days, especially at the East. I was sure she would succeed; but it was necessary that she should not seem to be alone. Her first remark after thanking me for acceding to her request showed that she realized this.

“Now,” she said, “I want an old man,—old enough to be my father,—who can write and look dignified, to be at the head of this establishment. He need not do anything except sit here from nine to twelve; but he must be a gentleman, understand business, be able to write, and worthy of absolute confidence. Can you find me such a man?”

I thought I could if she gave me leave to speak freely of herself and her undertaking. That afternoon I brought Mr. Burrill to see her. As a result of some conversation with Mr. Gauge, it was arranged the next day that Burrill should only come to the office in the afternoons, and that I should be allowed to leave at a rather earlier hour than was then usual in our office.

A day or two afterwards I received a neat card, on which was pasted a photograph; below it were printed these words:

“The lady whose portrait is given above is my beloved wife, Florence C. Field, who was separated from me by untoward accident. Should any one to whom this may come recognize the original of this photograph, he will confer a favor by placing this in her hands and sending her address to P.O. Box 31, New York City.

“(Signed)

FRANK FIELD.”

I complied with the first of these requests. Burrill was present when I placed the card in Miss Florence’s hands.

“It is a lie!—a mean, cowardly lie!” she exclaimed, stamping her foot angrily. “He wishes to persecute and annoy me, and Gauge & Swallow are doing his dirty work for him.”

“Begging your pardon,” said Burrill, firmly but deferentially, “Gauge & Swallow don’t do dirty work for anybody.”

Miss Florence made no reply.

The “Temple of Chirographic Art,” despite its absurd name, or perhaps because of it, was a success from the first. Whatever strikes the public fancy is sure to go. I do not think it was so much the pre-

tentious title as the fact that was soon apparent that common sense and good work were hidden under it. There was nothing cheap about the "Temple" except its name. I always blushed when I saw that. But there was no lack of worshippers. Private lessons at a high rate or public ones at a lower,—that was what the institution offered. But it promised nothing it was not able to perform. Morning and evening its classes were full. Every hour of the day its private rooms were engaged, sometimes by individuals and sometimes by friendly parties who were not ashamed to have one another know their desire to write legibly. Burrill taught a class in law-copying and engrossing on manuscript in the morning; I taught in the evening; and Miss Florence taught all the time. Burrill made an ideal manager, and was devoted to the interests of the institution. As for Miss Florence, she had not only her father's skill, but also his wonderful faculty for imparting knowledge. So matters went on quietly enough; she appeared content, and it seemed as if there was no danger that her interest in the work would flag.

Mr. Frank Field came to the office every day,—for "news of the loved and lost," the boy said. His secret leaked out, and he was always greeted with a smile by the clerks. He seemed neither disconsolate nor exultant. I could not but admire his persistency, and almost wished I might give him a hint of what he seemed so anxious to know.

Some months passed in this manner, when one day Mr. Gauge requested me to take a letter to Mr. Burrill.

"You know where he is at this time of day, Mr. Fountain, and it is important that I should have an answer at once. Take a cab," he added, as I left the room.

Twenty minutes after, I handed the letter to Burrill, and before he had broken the seal Mr. Gauge himself entered the office of the "Temple of Chirographic Art."

"I would like," he said, suavely, "to see Miss Estelle Florence."

There was no help for it. The twinkle in his eye showed that he had penetrated our secret. I went and found her, told her what had happened, and would have left her to fight her battle with the Senior alone, but she requested me to remain. I expected a rating, and was preparing my defence, when Mr. Gauge said,—

"I do not need to look twice to know that you are the person we have been doubly retained to discover."

"I suppose now I must look for further persecution," said the brave girl, as she faced him with flashing eyes.

"Not at all," said Mr. Gauge. "Your father employed us to hunt you up, see that you suffered for nothing, and ask your pardon for his harshness. He would be glad to receive you back, but realizes that he has forfeited the right to control your action."

There was a quiver about the girl's mouth, but she said nothing.

"As for Mr. Field——" continued the Senior.

"I will hear nothing about him," said Miss Florence, interrupting. "If he had been a man he would have seen that he had done me harm enough already, without advertising me all over the country like a stray dog."

"I beg your pardon," said the Senior, kindly. "Nothing of the kind has been done."

She flew to her desk and snatched from it the card I had given her: "What do you call that?"

"It is a card which has been sent to a few of your friends, in order to relieve you from the imputation caused by Mr. Field's former carelessness and ignorance of the law. You will perceive that it is an explicit admission of marriage, not an assertion of marital rights."

"I don't know anything about it, and I don't want to hear of him again,—ever!"

"I am sorry for that," said the Senior, coolly, "for there are one or two questions that have to be settled, and you are the only one who can decide them."

The girl had dried her eyes, and faced him with angry determination.

"In the first place," said Mr. Gauge, "I want to know who is to pay for all the advertising Gauge & Swallow have done for the 'Temple of Chirographic Art.' Here are thousands of costly cards giving Professor Cadmus's opinion of your merits in a fac-simile of his own inimitable handwriting, a lot of puffs costing a hundred dollars a column, and I have no idea how many thousand circulars, which we have mailed to all parts of the country. Now, here are two men who both insist on paying the bills. What shall we do?"

"I shall pay them myself," she said, extending her hand, and biting her lip to keep back the tears.

"Unfortunately, we have already paid the bills, by the express order of both our clients. The only question is, which ought to be allowed to reimburse us."

"You had better charge it to both, so as to make no mistake," she answered, with something like a sneer.

"That is not the kind of double-entry Gauge & Swallow practise," said the Senior, with a twinkle. "Besides that, there is another trouble. Mr. Marshall Field informed his son, as soon as he heard of the affair, that if you did not acknowledge him as your husband within six months he would turn him out of the firm and cut him off with a shilling, as he will have nothing to do with a blackguard such as he must be if you refuse to accept him. Here is his letter, and you will see that the time is nearly up."

"Oh, do go away!" she exclaimed. "Are there no gentlemen left in the world, that I must be hunted and badgered by lawyers and detectives, simply because I try to make an honest living when those who should have given me protection leave me to bear the burden of their neglect and cowardice? Are you, too, in this plot?" she asked, turning upon Burrill and myself.

Before either of us could answer, the Senior interposed, in a voice as gentle as a girl's:

"My dear young lady, they knew no more than you. Instead of seeking to persecute, every one has sought to protect. Should my own daughter ever meet with trouble of any kind, I can only hope that she may find as loyal friends as you have met, and bear herself as bravely under difficulty."

He bowed with profound reverence as he withdrew. She leaned her head upon her arms on the open desk before her, and Burrill and I stole out at the Senior's heels. Mr. Frank Field was in the hall outside. Mr. Gauge pointed over his shoulder with his thumb, and said,—

"We throw up our brief, sir. Your matter is in a court where Gauge & Swallow are not licensed to practise."

Mr. Field entered the room and closed the door.

"I do not think we need wait for the verdict," the Senior added, with a smile, as his client disappeared.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Gauge, in his blandest manner, as we drove back to the office, "I am proud of your loyalty to a distressed woman, but you ought not to think you could hoodwink Gauge & Swallow."

"How did you find it out, sir?" asked Burrill, humbly

"Mr. Fountain's face gave away his secret. We just put a man on his track, and knew as much as he did in twenty-four hours. You acted nobly, gentlemen, and will lose nothing by having done so. I have arranged a sale of the business to a Mercantile College firm, on condition that you retain your professorships in the new institution,—if Miss Florence will consent to sell, that is."

She did consent. There was a gay wedding soon after. All of Gauge & Swallow's clerks were invited. I did not go, my mother's health requiring me to be absent from the city at that time: that, at least, was the excuse I rendered.

I have held a professorship of commercial law ever since. It has not been worth much in a professional way,—such things don't count for much at the bar,—but the salary has been a consideration. It has given me some practice, too, which has gone in with Gauge & Swallow's, but always under my name, and the fees and costs have been carried to my credit without charge for service or assistance.

Albion W. Tourgee.

THE DIFFERENCE.

SHE stood beside the summer sea
As radiant as the morn :
I read in her enraptured eyes
That Love was born.

She crouched beside the winter sea
As though all hope had fled :
I saw within her haggard eyes
That Love was dead.

William H. Hayne.

A TALK WITH A PRESIDENT'S SON.

GENERAL JOHN TYLER, the son of the President, lives at Washington. He is a fine-looking old man, with a great dome-like head covered with a shock of silky hair which is now the color of silver. He has a broad, high forehead, bright, friendly blue eyes which fill with earnestness as he talks, and fair-skinned features cast in the same mould as those of his father. He is the second son of President Tyler, and he has, perhaps, lived as much history as any man now living. He was associated with his father in his political struggles during the days of Jackson and Van Buren, and he was old enough at the time of President Harrison's death to become the private secretary of his father. Throughout all of that stormy administration which succeeded the death of Harrison he was the confidant of President Tyler and his party. I have had many chats with him about the Tyler administration, and in them he has told me much of its unwritten history.

His talk about his father is especially interesting, and in the following article I give the substance of a recent conversation, omitting my questions and repeating General Tyler's own words. "My father," said General Tyler, "was esteemed a very fine-looking man. He was tall and well formed, and he looked much like the greater Pitt. We often had visitors at the White House from abroad who commented upon this resemblance, and Pitt's portraits were sometimes sent to us as likenesses of President Tyler.

"My father's face and figure bore also a striking resemblance to that of the Duke of Wellington. During the discussion as to the exchequer plan, Sir Horseley Palmer, the president of the Bank of England, came to this country. When he landed at New York he stopped at the Howard House, which was a great hotel for fashionable people in early days. His first act here was to go into the barber-shop in the lower part of the house to get shaved. While he was waiting for his turn he picked up a newspaper, and there read my father's letter in regard to the exchequer, which was published that day. As he concluded it, Sir Horseley Palmer dropped the paper, and, rushing out of the shop without waiting for his shave, took the first train to Washington. He came from the dépôt straight to the White House, and, entering the private secretary's room, which you know adjoins that of the President, he asked me if he could see President Tyler. We had democratic ways then, and I pointed to the next room, where my father was engaged with another gentleman, telling him that the President was in and could be seen. Sir Horseley Palmer stepped to the door, which was open, and looked in. As he saw my father facing him, he started back involuntarily, and, raising his hands, exclaimed, 'My God! there is the Duke of Wellington!' And indeed the likeness of my father to the hero of Waterloo is very striking. He possessed the same race-blood as both Pitt and Wellington, and I think he had many traits in common with those men.

"The White House was managed very differently during the days of Tyler than it is now. The President had to pay the expenses of lighting and heating, and even the cost of the lights of the lamps in front of the White House was charged to him. For my services as private secretary I received not one dollar from the government, and my father spent the whole of his salary in keeping up the Presidential establishment. President Tyler was very plain in his dress and very simple in all his habits. It was his custom to go to bed promptly at ten o'clock, and it came to be known that this was the rule even in the White House. He rose before daylight, and was often at his desk as early as three o'clock in the morning. He worked by the light of a candle, and did the most of his Presidential work before breakfast. At nine A.M. we had breakfast, generally *en famille*. After that father spent the morning, till Congress met, in receiving the many Representatives and Senators who called. At noon he held his Cabinet meetings, and after these were over he received the public.

"My father looked upon the Cabinet in a different light from that in which it is viewed by the President of to-day. He believed it was purely an auxiliary of the President, formed to aid him in carrying out his ideas, and in the furthering of his own lines of policy. In matters connected with the various Departments he advised with the respective secretaries separately. His Cabinet meetings were not held to consider Department details, and the questions discussed at them were those of national interest and the general policy of the administration. His Cabinet underwent many changes during his term,—changes which were intentional on his part. He formed his Cabinets so as to have them correspond with the issues he intended to bring before them. For instance, he kept Daniel Webster at the head of the State Department, because he thought him better fitted than any other man to deal with the Northeast boundary line and to manage the negotiations with regard to it. When new questions came up he changed his Cabinet to suit them. He always ruled his Cabinet, and did not permit them to dictate to him.

"When my father succeeded to the Presidency he continued President Harrison's Cabinet in office, until he found that they were working against him. His first Cabinet meeting was held on the day succeeding the death of President Harrison. When all the members were present, and the doors were closed, Mr. Webster, the Secretary of State, arose and gravely addressed my father, saying, 'Mr. President, I suppose you intend to carry out the ideas and customs of your predecessor, and this administration, inaugurated by President Harrison, will continue in the same line of policy under which it has been begun.'

"My father, much astonished, nodded slightly, wondering what was to come next, and Mr. Webster went on: 'Mr. President, it was our custom in the Cabinet meetings of the deceased President that the President should preside over them. All measures whatever relating to the administration were obliged to be brought before the Cabinet, and their settlement was decided by the majority, each member of the Cabinet and the President having but one vote.'

"My father was always courteous, but he was also firm, and in

responding to this exhibition of adamant cheek he rose and spoke substantially as follows: 'I beg your pardon, gentlemen, I am very glad to have in my Cabinet such able statesmen as you have proved yourselves to be. And I shall be pleased to avail myself of your counsel and advice. But I can never consent to being dictated to as to what I shall or shall not do. I, as President, shall be responsible for my administration. I hope to have your hearty co-operation in carrying out its measures. So long as you see fit to do this, I shall be glad to have you with me. When you think otherwise, your resignations will be accepted.'

In response to a question as to how John C. Calhoun happened to become a member of President Tyler's Cabinet, General Tyler said, "It was not my father's choice. He was compelled to do it, and Henry A. Wise, of Virginia, was the cause. There was no action during my father's administration which he regretted more than this. Through it his treaty for the annexation of Texas fell through, and had it not been for Wise and Calhoun the war with Mexico would probably never have occurred.

"At the time of Mr. Upshur's death—Upshur was, you know, my father's Secretary of State, and he was blown up by the explosion on board the Princeton—the treaty for the annexation of Texas was all complete, and ready for signature. Such arrangements had been made with various Senators that they were sure to be confirmed; and Tom Benton, who was the chief opposing element, had been placated by my father's giving his son-in-law John C. Fremont the command of the exploring expedition to the West over the heads of older men. Senator Benton could be flattered as easily as any man who ever entered the United States Senate-chamber. He had consented to espouse the cause of annexation, and it was thought that the treaty was altogether arranged. Father had even sent Governor Wilson Shannon of Ohio to Mexico as his ambassador, with instructions as to how to proceed, and our understanding with Mexico was such that we did not doubt that the treaties would be accepted at once. They were so drawn as to give us all of Texas without great expense, and at the same time the whole of the valuable harbor at San Francisco.

"England was treating with Mexico for Texas at the same time, and the State was apparently ready to drop into her hands. You can imagine how happy my father was at the prospect of the annexation. Mr. Upshur was also very proud of the treaty. The night before he died he had copied it all in his own handwriting, and had left it on the table ready to be signed and confirmed the next day. But the explosion of the Princeton threw everything into confusion, and Calhoun's appointment as Secretary of State made Tom Benton so angry that he threw all his weight against the treaty and thus prevented its confirmation.

"Now let me tell you how Calhoun got that appointment. Our friends in Congress were headed by Henry A. Wise, of Virginia. We had not a very large force in the two Houses. It was, in fact, known as 'the corporal's-guard.' Henry A. Wise, their leader, was a good fellow, and he had many pleasant qualities. He was a man of great

ability, but the very devil as an adviser. On the day of Upshur's death, without any consultation with my father, he went to MacDuffie, the leading Senator from South Carolina, and instructed him to write to John C. Calhoun to come at President Tyler's request and accept the portfolio of State.

"On the following day Mr. Wise came to the White House and told the President what he had done. He said the letter had been sent, and that it could not be withdrawn. President Tyler was thunderstruck. He gripped his chair with all his force. It was all he could do to resist telling Wise to begone from him forever. Before saying a word he got up and walked across the floor, and then came back in front of Mr. Wise, and, looking him sternly in the eye, said, 'Mr. Wise, you certainly have not done this thing!'

"Mr. Wise quailed, but said nothing. Father then walked to the other side of the room again, and, returning, exclaimed emphatically, 'Mr. Wise, you cannot have done this thing!' And, as Mr. Wise still said nothing, he exclaimed in rage, 'Wise, have you done this thing?'

"It was all my father could do to keep from telling him to go away and never to come into his sight. But Wise was his chief friend in Congress, and he did not dare to break with him. As it was, it was years before he felt well towards him, and he never really forgave him. But the letter had been sent, and it could not be withdrawn. Calhoun was appointed. The result was, as my father foresaw at the beginning, that Tom Benton raged around like a great bull, and Calhoun's name had the effect of the red rag flaunted in his face. When the treaty came up he howled against it, and defeated it by calling it a Calhoun conspiracy.

"The annexation question was not, however, by any means dropped; and it was through it that my father revenged himself upon both Clay and Van Buren. These two men, one of the Whig and the other of the old Democratic party, were both filled with the ambition to succeed President Tyler; and, though they had been enemies for several years, they all at once combined their forces to disparage my father's administration and to prevent his renomination. Both of them feared him. Clay did not care to run as a candidate opposed to him, and Van Buren saw there was little hope of his getting the nomination if President Tyler after a successful administration should desire one. The result was, they both combined to beat Tyler. Martin Van Buren paid a visit to Mr. Clay at Ashland, and Henry Clay went up and spent several days with Van Buren at Kinderhook. Shortly after this two letters appeared in the Washington papers strikingly similar in tone, and both opposed to the annexation of Texas. Clay's letter came out in the *National Intelligencer*, and Van Buren's in the *Globe*, and both on the same day. During my father's administration these men thwarted his designs at every opportunity, leaving no stone unturned to make him unpopular.

"Father's political sagacity told him that no man who opposed the annexation of Texas could be elected President, and he rejoiced at their both coming out against it because he was so strongly favoring it. After the death of Mr. Upshur and the defeat of the treaty the

work for annexation still went on, but it was in secret. England's position in the mean while became more threatening, and Andrew Jackson grew anxious to have Texas annexed. He privately wrote letter after letter to my father in regard to it, and at the same time urged continuously two Tennessee Representatives, Messrs. A. V. Brown and Cave Johnson, to do all they could to influence the President in that direction. Father was anxious that Andrew Jackson should come out publicly in favor of annexation, as his name was still a power in the land and such an action would militate against any man who favored it. Jackson's Congressional friends, however, knew nothing of the negotiation then going on, nor did they know that the President was in personal communication with Andrew Jackson. They would bring Jackson's private letters to them to President Tyler and read them to him.

"At last one day father said, 'I am inclined to do as Mr. Jackson desires; but these letters are private. If I do this I must have a letter from Andrew Jackson of which the publication is authorized.' The two Congressmen went away highly elated. They wrote to Jackson and procured the letter. They then came with it to the White House. Father told them to have it published and bring the paper to him, and that he would give his answer. The following day it appeared in the *Globe* over Andrew Jackson's signature, and that afternoon Messrs. Brown and Johnson came to the White House, walking as if on air, with the paper in their hands. When they showed it to the President he coolly replied,—

"Gentlemen, I have to inform you that such negotiations as you ask have been pending for several months, and that they are now about completed.' You can imagine the tableau. The airy look faded out of the faces of Johnson and Brown, and they walked away weighing several pounds more than when they had come in.

"So father obtained Jackson's declaration against Van Buren. This was, however, very near the date of the nominating conventions, and he found upon looking over the field that Van Buren had already a majority of the delegates. If Jackson would declare in favor of the two-thirds rule the spirit of the party was such that it would take two-thirds of the convention to secure a nomination. Father then sends Robert J. Walker to the Hermitage to get Jackson to declare for the two-thirds rule. Jackson so comes out, and he advises his friends among the delegates to insist upon this.

"Notwithstanding all this, father still feared that Van Buren might yet be nominated, and to make sure he decided to enter the race himself and thus divide Van Buren's strength, intending in case he should get the nomination to resign in favor of some one else than Van Buren.

"President Tyler never had any idea of being a *bona fide* candidate for a renomination. I can say this emphatically; for I remember well the day he first mentioned the subject to his family. This was the first time he had spoken of it to any one. It was one morning at breakfast, when only the family was present. Father told us he intended to be a candidate for another term as President, and he told us

why he had concluded to do so. He said it was solely to defeat Van Buren, and that he intended to resign if he got the nomination. Soon after this he caused a convention to be called at Baltimore at the same time as that of the Democratic convention. There were seventeen or eighteen hundred at this Tyler convention, and it renominated my father. President Tyler's friends stuck to him well, and they succeeded in adopting the two-thirds rule, and through it Van Buren was defeated and James K. Polk was nominated. My father, having now accomplished his end, resigned. It was no ordinary man who could, with only a corporal's guard to help him, crush two such men as Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay."

Frank G. Carpenter.

BALLADE OF THE ARCADIAN IN BUSINESS.

IN streets, amid the city signs,—
 Jewels, To Let, Tobacco, Coal,
 Where Law abuts on Ales and Wines,
 And where the fleet expresses roll,—
 In ways below the wiry pole,
 Through alleys bare of bud or tree,
 On trade-winds,—will his shepherd soul
 Float out to fluting Arcady?

Some twitter in the civic vines;
 A watered sprig about a mole;
 A beggar's ballad ere he whines
 For comfort of the flowing bowl,—
 These; or some river-crossing toll,
 Suburban, rung where meadows be;
 These, with him, over money's shoal,
 Float out to fluting Arcady!

His entries ever run to "lines,"
 As "sheepskin" leads to "shady knoll;"
 In "wool" his subtle sense divines
 The bleat, the pipe, the oaken bole.
 Ah, Pan in Mammon's hard control,
 Would pastor ways be sweet to thee?
 First live thy life, then, spirit-whole,
 Float out to fluting Arcady!

ENVOI.

But hearken, Runners at the goal,
 Who give no heed to Beauty's plea!—
 Not all who baffle dust and dole
 Float out to fluting Arcady!

Harrison S. Morris.

OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP

WITH READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

[The Monthly Gossip will henceforth be an editorial department in which information will be volunteered upon any literary, scientific, or miscellaneous topic of general interest, and queries on such topics will be answered. Queries from all sources are invited, and every effort will be made to answer them fully and entertainingly. But it is requested that correspondents will refrain from sending queries to which sufficient answers may be found in such familiar books of reference as Brewer's "Reader's Handbook," Brewer's "Phrase and Fable," Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations," Wheeler's "Noted Names of Fiction," Lippincott's "Biographical Dictionary," Chambers's and other Encyclopædias, Classical Dictionaries, etc. All queries received before the 26th of February will be answered in the April number, and so on.]

WHAT is the secret of poetry? What is the nameless power that resides in certain combinations of words, so that, though they express nothing new or deep or striking, they eat into the memory with phosphoric eagerness? Gray's "Elegy," for instance, has been called a mosaic of quotations, but no one has yet discovered the recipe for producing another mosaic of the same kind. Cowper's "Wreck of the Royal George" is a mere string of commonplaces. "Given an ordinary newspaper paragraph about wreck or battle," says Leslie Stephen, "turn it into the simplest possible language, do not introduce a single metaphor or figure of speech, indulge in none but the most obvious of all reflections,—as, for example, that when a man is once drowned he won't win any more battles,—and produce as the result a copy of verses which nobody can ever read without instantly knowing them by heart. How Cowper managed to perform such a feat, and why not one poet even in a hundred can perform it, are questions which might lead to some curious critical speculation." Longfellow has performed the same feat over and over again. There are poems of his which once read become for ever after a portion of your best and truest self. Yet you would be at a loss to defend them against the logic or the satire of the Philistine. Take "The Psalm of Life" as an instance. There is not an original thought in it. The most striking expressions are plagiarisms; the rest are commonplaces. "Art is long and time is fleeting" is a paraphrase of Horace's *Ars longa, vita brevis est*. The comparison of the heart to a muffled drum is to be found in the Bishop of Chichester's poem on the death of his wife, etc. Furthermore, there is an extraordinary confusion of metaphors. Here is how a critic in the *Saturday Review* once exposed this confusion. "The Psalm of Life, if there be any meaning in the English language, is gibberish. Let us analyze two of the verses:

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

"Footprints that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

"Even if one can conceive of life as a 'solemn main,' bordered by the 'sands of time,' how can the mariners on the main leave their footprints on the sands? And what possible comfort can footprints on the sands be to a shipwrecked brother who, despite his shipwreck, still keeps persistently sailing o'er life's solemn main? The brother must have very sharp eyes if he could see footprints on the sand from his raft, for his ship is supposed to have been wrecked long ago. Perhaps Mr. Longfellow was thinking of the footstep which Robinson Crusoe found on the sand of his desert island. But Robinson was not sailing when he detected that isolated phenomenon; nor, when he saw it, did he 'take heart again.'" You can't but agree with every word of this criticism. Yet you go back to the poem and find that it has lost none of its power to charm and to comfort.

If five people of healthy critical judgment were asked to select from Byron the most striking and magnificent passage, probably three of them would choose the "Address to the Ocean" in "Childe Harold." The Address is as vulnerable as anything in Longfellow. No less a person than Christopher North once fell foul of it and danced upon its prostrate corpse with ghoulish glee. The whole criticism is too long to quote, but here is how the first stanza is treated:

"Roll on, thou deep and dark-blue ocean, roll!"

says the critic, "is spirited and sonorous—and that is well—but it is nothing more—and the initial line should have been a nobler burst. 'Deep and dark-blue' are epithets that can neither be much praised nor blamed—to our mind they had been better away—for the images they suggest, if not in dissonance—are not in consonance with the thoughts that follow them—and seem not to suggest them but to stand by themselves as silent images—or rather forms of speech.

"Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain.

In vain? That is—without injuring thee? But they were not seeking to do so—nor can imagination conceive how they could—and if that be not the poet's meaning, what is it? Ten thousand fleets sweeping over the deep, dark-blue ocean it may not be easy to picture to oneself—but he who can will have glorious conception of the power of man on the amplitude of the sea. The poet's meaning now becomes less obscure—and he says well, 'man marks the earth with ruin,' but not well, 'his control stops with the shore.' That is poetic—and does not tell. How could he mark the sea with ruin? There is nothing there to ruin—and there can be no contrast.

"Upon the watery plain

The wrecks are all thy deeds.

Call you that poetry? With the ocean personified before his own eyes, by his own soul, he yet speaks of his deeds on 'the watery plain.' To a poet inspired that had been impossible—but, 'the vision and the faculty divine' were not with him—and he was merely inditing verses.

"Nor doth remain

A shadow of man's ravage save his own,

is hard to scan, and full of confusion. To extricate any meaning from the words you must alter them, but 'tis hardly worth the pains. You frown—tell us then what you understand by 'shadow of man's ravage save his own'?

"Like a drop of rain

He sinks into thy depths,

to please you, we shall say is good—though we hardly think so—for wrecks on wrecks are shown to our imagination, and thousands of creatures perish—'man' here means men—if not, how unimpassioned the tale of his doom—but 'a drop of rain'—one single drop—was never yet seen by itself sinking into the depths of the sea—and further be assured by us, oh neophyte! with Byron in thy breast, that 'with bubbling groan' ought not to be there, for a drop of rain melts silently in a moment, and since it is said that 'like a drop of rain he sinks,' erase the words from your copy, and for rhyme have reason.

"Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown."

What! do we find fault with that line? Yes—erase it. The poet is not singing a lament for sailors drowned at sea. He is singing the sea's wrath to man. The sea bids the ship go down—and down she goes—he wastes no thought on the crew nor on their wives and sweethearts. What can it possibly be to him that they sink 'without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown'?

"But to cut the matter short—or to take the bull by the horns—the line as it stands, viewing it as an expression of human sympathy and sorrow in the poet's heart, forgetting the sea in the sailors, is an ambitious failure. 'Tis a cold accumulation of melancholy circumstances which were all inevitable—of which the opposites were impossible—debarred by nature and fate. There is no pathos in it—'not a bit.' It is absurd, it is ludicrous—yes, it makes us laugh—though rather than laugh at misery, human or brute, we would choose to pass all our life in the Cave of Trophonius. 'Without a grave'—who was to dig it? Show us sexton, spade, sod. As on the dry land no man ever yet was drowned—so at sea no man ever yet was buried but in the water—that is first—till the sea perhaps stamps him into the sand. Notwithstanding all that, all men speak of the sailor's grave—though, were they to ask themselves what they meant, they would probably answer—fish. 'Uncoffined'—why, the carpenter had other work during all this stormy *home-bound* voyage than to get coffins for the crew. The last thing he did was to cut away her masts. But she was water-logged, and would not right—blew up without powder which by that time was mire—and then was sucked into the jaws of the Old One—like Jonah into the whale's belly. Uncoffined, indeed! Why, the whole four hundred men were in blue jackets—most of them sober enough in all conscience—but not a few drunk as blazes—some capering about stark mad—and one delirious Jacky Tar dancing a hornpipe on the quarter-deck, maugre the remonstrances of the chaplain. 'Unknelled'—who was to toll the bell? Davy Jones,—and he did toll it—the ship's bell—a very Paganini ringing a full peal on its single self—and with most miraculous organ multiplying triple-bobs and bob-majors—in mockery of the funeral—as if it were a marriage—and strange must it have been to the ears of the more tenacious of life and timber among the sinking crew to hear below all that booming, and above it the well-known music from the steeples in both towns—both Devonport and Plymouth—welcoming the old frigate back again to the quiet Tamar."

Pope excelled in satire. Of all his satirical portraits the most terrible is that he has drawn of Addison. De Quincey has pointed out that the whole passage rests upon a blunder, "and the blunder is so broad and palpable that it

implies instant forgetfulness, both in the writer and the reader. The idea which furnishes the basis of the passage is this: that the conduct ascribed to Addison is in its own nature so despicable as to extort laughter by its primary impulse, but that this laughter changes into weeping when we come to understand that the person concerned in this delinquency is Addison. The change, the transfiguration, in our mood of contemplating the offence, is charged upon the discovery which we are supposed to make as to the person of the offender; that which by its baseness had been simply comic when imputed to some corresponding author passes into a tragic *coup-de-théâtre* when it is suddenly traced back to a man of original genius. The whole, therefore, of this effect is made to depend upon the sudden scenical transition from a supposed petty criminal to one of high distinction. And meantime no such stage effect had been possible, since the knowledge that a man of genius was the offender had been what we started with from the beginning. 'Our laughter is changed to tears,' says Pope, 'as soon as we discover that the base act had a noble author.' And, behold! the initial feature in the whole description of the case is that the libeller was one whom 'true genius fired.'

"Peace to all such: But were there one whose mind
True genius fires, etc.

Before the offence is described, the perpetrator is already characterized as a man of genius; and, in spite of that knowledge, we laugh. But suddenly our mood changes, and we weep; but why, I beseech you? Simply because we have ascertained the author to be a man of genius.

"Who would not laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?"

Most cultivated persons, if they were asked what is the greatest poem in modern literature, would unhesitatingly answer, "Hamlet." But Voltaire called "Hamlet" the work of a drunken savage, Goldsmith exposed the absurdity of its most famous speech, "To be, or not to be," and Sardou has recently called the drama idiotic. Hamlet, says Sardou, is an empty wind-bag hero, whom Shakespeare has clothed in a dramatic fog, and whom the German critics have stuffed with all their cloudy concepts, with all their uncertain dissertations, with all the smoke in their pipes, with all the besotted obscurity of their beer-cellars. The Ghost is simply ridiculous. He appears to everybody save his wife. Why is he visible to Horatio, to Bernardo, to a lot of indifferent people, and never to the wife who murdered him? What a comic scene is that of the oath! Horatio and Marcellus swear never to reveal what they have seen. Why doesn't Bernardo swear too? Or, rather, what is the use of any one swearing? The doting old ghost has forgotten his posthumous visits to the sentinels of the castle. "As to the philosophy, I find it no better than the plot. People go into ecstasies over the famous soliloquy 'To be or not to be.' I cannot myself know if our souls are annihilated after death or not. But if any one is well informed upon that point, it is Hamlet, who talks every day with his defunct father. I declare, and I repeat, that there is nothing good in the play, in my opinion, except the scene with the actors, the idea of causing to be played before the king and queen a murder similar to that which they had committed, in order to surprise their secret. As to the duel at the end, and the exchange of foils which brings about the catastrophe, the weakest playwright of to-day would not dare to employ such a method to end his piece."

Well, well! We know that Jeffrey thought "The Excursion" wouldn't do, and doubted of "Wilhelm Meister." We know that Coleridge denounced "Faust." We know that Scott's novels have been called pantomimes, and Dickens's pot-house pleasantries, that high critical authority has spoken of Ruskin's "Modern Painters" as declamatory trash, of Pope's "Essay on Criticism" as a pert, insipid piece of commonplace, of Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" as drivelling prose run mad, of Keats's "Endymion" as gratuitous nonsense, of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" as meaningless.

Perhaps "Hamlet" may survive the strictures of M. Sardou.

EDITOR OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP,—In your article on the Doppelgänger legend in the January number I notice a reference to a Spanish play called "El Embozado." Mr. Stoddard in his Life of Poe speaks of the same play. Such a drama may exist, though I very much doubt it, but unquestionably the reference in Byron's letter is to Calderon's "Purgatory of St. Patrick." Shelley was engaged upon Calderon, had translated parts of the "Wonder-Working Magician," and nothing is more likely than that he was attracted by the "Purgatory," which is Calderon's greatest *auto*. The bad hero of the piece goes through the adventures as recited in your article. "The Doppelgänger idea is elaborated by Calderon from the prose legend, in which, instead of a masked figure following the hero, there comes to him at every crisis of his fate, falling from space unto his feet, a bit of folded paper on which he finds inscribed his own name.

The Spanish poet Gongora has a ballad in which the legend in question is thrillingly embodied. A young man is hurrying to a rendezvous with a nun, when he hears an outcry and tumult in the street. He withdraws into an archway, when a man flies past him pursued by others. Almost at his feet the pursued one is stabbed to death by many swords. The murderers fly, and there enters a procession of priests, who take up the dead body and bear it into a neighboring church. The young man follows, fascinated. The church is lighted up. Mass is said and requiems chanted for the dead. At last the young man approaches near enough to see the corpse. It is himself!

L. M.

EDITOR OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP,—I read about the genesis of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" in the January *Lippincott*, and I am going to give you a small clipping from my note-book as presumably hinging on the same subject. In one of Hawthorne's "Note-Books" occurs this suggestion for an intended story: "A man living a wicked life in one place, and simultaneously a virtuous and religious life in another." I was struck with this, because I had just read Stevenson's book, and I "made a note on't."

Now, I have a simple little question to ask the "Gossip." In his essay on Addison, Macaulay says, "Of Blackmore's attainments in the ancient tongues it may be sufficient to say that, in his prose, he has confounded an aphorism with an apophthegm," etc. I asked my teacher (for I am only a school-boy) what the real difference was between an aphorism and an apophthegm, but he couldn't tell. He said Macaulay was over-critical. Now, was he? and can you tell the difference?

J. W. Smith.

According to Crabb's "English Synonymes," an *aphorism* differs from an *apophthegm* in that the latter, like the English *saying*, carries the mind back to the person speaking, and derives its value as much from the person who utters it as from the thing uttered. But the distinction is rarely observed.

THE ONE HUNDRED PRIZE QUESTIONS.

The series of questions for the best and fullest solutions to which prizes amounting to one hundred and seventy-five dollars were offered in our February number is continued in the following twenty questions:

21. Who was the giant Hickafric or Hickathrift?
22. Who was the Queen Pomare celebrated in French literature?
23. What famous general is said to have been suckled by swine?
24. Who was the king of Yvetot (le roi d'Yvetot)?
25. When was the Great Wall of China built?
26. What is the origin of the phrase "Who breaks—pays"?
27. What is a tinker's dam?
28. Whence the expression "Comparisons are odious"?
29. Who was Soapy Sam?
30. When and where did visiting-cards originate?
31. Whence the proverb "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip"?
32. Whence arose the superstition that there is luck in a horse-shoe?
33. Who was Peter Schlemihl, and did he have any prototype in real life or in legend?
34. Who was the probable original of Sam Weller?
35. What bridge does Hood celebrate as the Bridge of Sighs?
36. Whence the expression "to take the cake"?
37. What is the London Stone?
38. Whence the expression "where the shoe pinches"?
39. Who is said to have been the original of Thackeray's *Blanche Amory*?
40. What is a bezant, and what ceremony is associated with it?

 BOOK-TALK.

THE world, it is agreed, knows nothing of its greatest men. Is it equally ignorant of its best literature? We know that Shakespeare, Milton, and Bunyan had sunk almost into oblivion when a lucky chance rediscovered them. We know that the good old chivalrous ballads of England, ballads and songs unsurpassed in the popular poetry of any country, had been forgotten by all save the very learned or the very curious when Percy's "Reliques" rescued them for immortality. We know that the history of foreign literatures is full of similar narrow escapes. We wonder, therefore, what unknown masterpieces may lie hidden in the wrack of the past. Every now and then in these adventurous days a diver comes up to the surface with a pearl,—a single sample of the treasures that may be buried below. It is but a short time since William Blake was restored to literature. Only thirty years ago Charles Kingsley sought a place in modern fiction for the forgotten "Fool of Quality." Only twelve years ago Swinburne conquered a place in modern poetry for that splendid work of genius "Joseph and his Brethren," which had not even been forgotten, for it had never been known. A London publisher in 1882 brought out an edition of those masterpieces of fun and sarcasm, the novels of Thomas Love Peacock,—an author

whose peculiar fate it has been to be periodically forgotten and periodically re-discovered. And now comes a Philadelphia publisher, Mr. David McKay, with a new edition of the novels of Charles Brockden Brown, which have been out of print since 1857.

You approach these books with a certain reverence. Unless your studies in early American literature have been very meagre, you know that Brown has been called the Father of American fiction, that Hawthorne is said to have derived inspiration from him, that he wrote romances to which the epithets of "thrilling," "powerful," "morbid," "gloomy," have been freely applied by critics, that his description of the yellow fever in Philadelphia was once a classic and is still included in anthologies of American prose. The publisher, in his circular, jogs your memory a little further, and reminds you that Brown's novels, "Faust," and "The Robbers" were the books which took the deepest hold on Shelley's mind and had the strongest influence in the formation of his character, that the *Encyclopædia Britannica* calls Brown the precursor and only American rival of Hawthorne, that Prescott, Higginson, and Whipple have praised his novels, that Prof. Moses Coit Tyler says, "Their intrinsic merit is so great, and their historic place in our literature is so interesting, that it would be a very creditable and perhaps even a distinguished thing for an American publisher to reproduce them." Well, it is a distinguished thing. Brown's novels have long been out of print. A complete set is an absolute necessity in any library which professes to be fairly representative of American literature, just as a Cimabue is necessary to the completeness of any collection of Italian paintings. But it is more for their historic place than for their intrinsic merit that the novels are valuable. To appreciate their merit you must throw yourself back into the age when they were written and understand the novelist's position and environment. The only man of artistic genius in a chaotic and unformed society, he was like Cimabue in Florence. Transport yourself into the thirteenth century when you gaze at those uncouth Madonnas of Cimabue, and you gain some insight into the noble spirit that produced them. So with Brockden Brown and his novels. Let us take "Wieland, or the Transformation," as an example. This was his first romance,—indeed, the first romance ever issued in America. The heroine tells the story. Her father, a man of morbid religious views, dies in a mysterious—nay, marvellous—manner which is never fully explained. The predisposition to insanity which her brother Wieland inherits from him long remains latent. But a stranger named Carwin appears on the scene. It afterwards turns out he is a ventriloquist. Mysterious voices and warnings are heard. The heroine's lover thinks he overhears her in wicked conversation with a murderer. Complications of all sorts ensue. The ventriloquist—who has been merely consulting his own amusement and love of power—disappears. But the past events have unhinged Wieland's brain. In obedience to a fancied voice from heaven, he murders his wife and children. He is acquitted on the ground of insanity. The same voice drives him to attack his sister, who is rescued by the now repentant Carwin. Then Wieland kills himself. Carwin retires to remorseful solitude. The heroine marries her lover. The horrors of the tale are lightened by this delightful moral at the close: "That virtue should become the victim of treachery is, no doubt, a mournful consideration; but it will not escape your notice that the evils of which Carwin was the author owed their existence to the errors of the sufferers. . . . If Wieland had framed juster notions of moral duties

and of the divine attributes, or if I had been gifted with ordinary equanimity or foresight, the double-tongued deceiver would have been baffled and repelled." The naïve simplicity which this moral betrays runs through the whole book. It is the same simplicity that looks out upon you from the solemn depths of the grotesque eyes which Cimabue has given to his Madonnas. You have to make believe a great deal in order to take the author as seriously as he takes himself. Grant that ventriloquial powers can be developed to the marvellous extent here represented, that a number of people could be deceived into accepting the manifestations as superhuman, that startling coincidences can occur as frequently as they do here,—grant all these premises, and you may begin to see that the book is not only "gloomy" and "morbid," but "powerful" and "thrilling" also. The author has what critics call great imaginative insight,—that is to say, the passions and emotions of impossible people in impossible situations are intensely felt by him and vividly described. He excels in morbid pathology. There is a prediction of Hawthorne here,—as of Raphael in Cimabue. Wieland is an impressive figure, and the heroine, despite her prolixity, succeeds in describing her sensations under the various calamities that oppress her with harrowing energy.

It is not fair to judge Brockden Brown by "Wieland" alone. "Arthur Mervyn" is, on the whole, his masterpiece, though "Edgar Huntly" also occupies a high place and is interesting as anticipating Cooper and Chateaubriand in turning the Red Man to literary account, while "Ormond" contains his best female character,—the patient, long-suffering Clara Dudley, a character which fascinated Shelley above all the fair ladies of fiction. The sub-title of "Arthur Mervyn" is "Memoirs of the Year 1793,"—the year, it will be remembered, in which the yellow fever ravaged Philadelphia. The horrors of the pestilence, which are admirably described, form a dismal background to a very dismal story. Again the plot, though exciting and interesting, is full of startling improbabilities. The unexpected is continually happening,—which you can tolerate in real life, but not in fiction. The style is less verbose and turgid than in "Wieland." The characters are more human and life-like. The relations between the hero and his employer Welbeck are drawn with an evident reminiscence of Caleb Williams and Falkland, and the character of Welbeck in many particulars resembles that of Falkland ("Caleb Williams," by the way, was published in 1794, and "Arthur Mervyn" six years later). But there is no slavishness of imitation. Brown's genius was as potent a magician as Godwin's.

Mr. McKay has done a good work. Let us trust that other treasure-trove may be rescued from the past. Each of us, no doubt, has a pet book that we should be glad to see more widely known and appreciated. The Reviewer confesses to two especial favorites. First, the poems of J. C. Mangan, a true genius, whose influence is unmistakable in the poetical work of Edgar Allan Poe, a smaller man, though infinitely better known. Mangan's poems are largely translations from the German, or not so much translations as paraphrases, some of them so free as to be really original. He had too true an instinct to attempt any serious liberties with Goethe or Schiller, but his versions from the lesser poets, as for instance Rückert's "Ride around the Parapet," Freiligrath's "White Lady," Zedlitz's "Napoleon's Midnight Review," are often entirely new poems, new in metre, in manner, almost in subject, deriving only the skeleton idea from the original, and improving greatly on the original. His translations from the ancient Irish

and the Persian—including such gems as “Karaman,” “The Dark Rosaleen,” and “Sailing down the Bosphorus”—may probably be included in the same category, though the Reviewer has not had the advantage of examining the originals. And as to one poem which is avowedly original and autobiographical, —“The Nameless One,”—the Reviewer would think little of the man who could read unmoved that cry of agony from a prostrate soul. Not Real’s verses before his suicide, not William Winter’s “Orgia,” are more potent and searching. (Why, *en passant*, does not somebody collect Real’s poems into a volume?) The Reviewer’s other love is “The History of John De Castro,” a novel published about 1815, whose authorship he has never been able to determine, but which seems to him a masterpiece of broad, hearty, Rabelaisian humor, the only successful thing of the sort in English. That such a book should have excited no special comment on its first appearance, that it should not have passed into literature, that it should be absolutely unknown at the present day,—all these are problems which the Reviewer finds himself at a loss to solve.

Other books received are the following: From Cupples & Hurd, three novels translated from the German, “The Last Von Reckenburg,” translated by J. M. Percival, “The Angel of the Village,” by L. M. Ohorn, translated by Mrs. Matthews, and “The Monk’s Wedding,” by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, translated by S. H. Adams, all of them good in their way, and the last exceptionally strong and powerful; “Letters from Colorado,” by H. L. Wason, a number of legends of Western life versified rather cleverly; “Bledisloe, or Aunt Pen’s American Nieces,” an international story, agreeably told by Ada M. Trotter; “Old New-England Days,” by Sophie M. Damon, a pleasant story of rural New-England life a generation or two ago; “Zorah,” by Elisabeth Balch, a story of modern Egypt, full of passion and incident. From the Excelsior Publishing House, two useful hand-books, “The Rules of Order governing Public Meetings,” a guide to methods of public discussion and action, with official forms and practices, and a new edition of “The Standard Hoyle,” with important additions. From Thomas Whittaker, “A Village Maid,” by Helen Hays, a quiet and readable sketch of rural life. From Cushings & Bailey, “Memorials of a Southern Planter,” by Susan Dabney Smedes, a series of papers left by a genuine type of the nobler sort of *ante-bellum* planters and slave-owners, Thomas Gregory Smith Dabney, edited with filial care by his daughter. From Henry Holt, “Southern Silhouettes,” by Jeannette H. Walworth, a series of bright and vivid sketches of modern life in the South, which form an agreeable companion to the last-named volume. From E. Stanley Hart & Co., “Songs of New Sweden,” by Arthur Peterson, U.S.N., a young poet whose better work shows genuine inspiration, but who is not always seen at his best. From Funk & Wagnalls, “The Missing Sense, and the Hidden Things which it might Reveal,” by C. W. Woolbridge, a futile but ingenious attempt “to treat Spiritual Philosophy on a rational basis;” “Flag on the Mill,” by Mary B. Sleight; “Paradise,” by Lloyd S. Brice, a novel whose aim appears to be mainly satirical; “A Bundle of Letters to Busy Girls on Practical Matters,” by Grace H. Dodge, which even very idle girls should spare the time to read; “Gunethics, or the Ethical Status of Women,” by Rev. W. K. Brown, as affected and stilted as its title. From Benjamin & Bell, “Sea Spray, or Facts and Fancies of a Yachtsman,” by S. G. W. Benjamin, a collection of pleasantly-written articles. From the author, “Songs and Song-Legends,” indifferent verses by Edward Lippitt Fales.

CURRENT NOTES.

IF consumers prefer to buy an adulterated article of food because it can be had at a lower price, they undoubtedly have the right to do so, provided the adulterants are not of a character injurious to health. If such articles are not falsely sold as pure and the customer is not deceived as to their real character, the transaction is not illegitimate.

But the great danger in the traffic in adulterated food arises from the deception that is practised by manufacturers usually classing such goods as pure. This is almost invariably done when the adulterant is one that is injurious to health. For instance, manufacturers of alum and lime baking powders not only fail to inform the public of the real character of their goods, but carefully conceal the fact that they are made from these poisonous articles. Most of these manufacturers also claim that their articles are pure and wholesome, while some go still further and proclaim boldly that they are cream of tartar goods, or even the genuine Royal Baking Powder itself. No consumer will buy alum baking powders knowingly, for it is well understood that they are detrimental to health. The sale of lime and alum baking powders as pure and wholesome articles is, therefore, criminal, and it is satisfactory to notice that several persons engaged in such sale have already been brought to justice in the courts.

The official analysts have recently been active in the pursuit of these dishonest articles. The baking powders of several States have been carefully and critically examined. The officials are surprised at the large amount of lime and alum goods found. It is a suggestive fact that no baking powder except the Royal has been found without either lime or alum, and many contain both.

The chief service of lime is to add weight. It is true that lime, when subjected to heat, gives off a certain amount of carbonic acid gas, but a quicklime is left,—a caustic of most powerful nature. A small quantity of dry lime upon the tongue, or in the eye, produces painful effects; how much more serious must these effects be on the delicate membranes of the stomach, intestines, and kidneys, more particularly of infants and children, and especially when the lime is taken into the system day after day, and with almost every meal! This is said by physicians to be one of the causes of indigestion, dyspepsia, and those painful diseases of the kidneys now so prevalent.

Adulteration with lime is quite as much to be dreaded as with alum, which has heretofore received the most emphatic condemnation from food-analysts, physicians, and chemists, for the reason that, while alum may be partially dissolved by the heat of baking, it is impossible to destroy or change the nature of the lime, so that the entire amount in the baking powder passes, with all its injurious properties, into the stomach.

Pure baking powders are one of the chief aids to the cook in preparing perfect and wholesome food. While those are to be obtained of well-established reputation, like the Royal, of whose purity there has never been a question, it is proper to avoid all others.

THE famous phrase "No man is a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*" has been attributed to Madame de Sévigné, and, on the authority of Mlle. Aïssé, to Madame Cornuel (Letters, p. 161, Paris, 1853), but Marshal Catinat (1637-1712) had already said, "A man must be indeed a hero to appear such in the eyes of his valet," La Bruyère, "Rarely do great men appear great before their valets," and Montaigne, "Few men are admired by their servants" (Essays, III. 2). All these sayings were, however, anticipated by Antigonus I., King of Sparta, who when Hermodotus in his poems had described him as a god and son of Helios (the sun) observed, "This will be news to my body-servant."

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE.—In Nervous, Mental, or Physical Exhaustion.—Dr. N. S. Read, Chandlerville, Illinois, says, "It is of the highest value in mental and nervous exhaustion attended by such functional disturbances as sick headache, dyspepsia, diminished vitality, etc."

PETER HENDERSON & Co., the well-known market-gardeners of New York, send us their "Manual of Everything for the Garden," a large 8vo pamphlet, illustrated with three fine colored prints and a number of wood-cuts, and giving valuable information to the husbandman and the gardener, such as descriptions of vegetables, grasses, fruits, flowers, and new and rare plants, the prices of seeds, etc. The manual, together with specimens of seeds, will be forwarded to any address on receipt of twenty-five cents.

THE modern air-cushion was, it seems, anticipated by Ben Jonson. In "The Alchemist" he makes Sir Epicure Mammon, in enumerating the pleasures to be his when in possession of the philosopher's stone, say,—

I will have all my beds blown up, not stuffed;
Down is too hard.

THOSE who copy letters have experienced the annoyance and inconvenience of copying in the old way by using a brush and water-cup. This is obviated by the use of the "Hill Blotter Bath," manufactured by the B. B. Hill Manufacturing Company, 1020 New Market Street, Philadelphia, which insures perfect results in copying letters, bills, etc., whether written with pen or by the type-writing machine. Having been on trial for ten years, it has proved itself to be a device of merit, is coming into very general use, and is being freely endorsed by all classes of business-men.

THE Duke Humphrey with whom the dinnerless are facetiously said to dine was Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (Henry V.'s brother), who was Protector during the minority of Henry VI. He was a great patron of literature and the arts, and famous for his hospitality. Fuller, in his "Worthies," tells us that the proverb "hath altered the original meaning thereof, for first it signified *alienâ vivere quadrâ*, to eat by the bounty or feed by the favor of another man, for Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (commonly called the good Duke), was so hospitable that every man of fashion otherwise unprovided was welcome to dine with him. But after the death of the good Duke Humphrey (when many of his former almsmen were at a losse for a meal's meat) this proverb did alter its copy, to dine with Duke Humphrey importing to be dinnerless."

A more circumstantial explanation of the saying is that on the duke's death

the report arose that his monument was to be erected in St. Paul's. The report proved untrue. When a wag had no place to dine he would hang around the aisles of St. Paul's, claiming to be looking for the monument of Duke Humphrey. This soon became known as dining with Duke Humphrey, and a monument (really that of Sir John Beauchamp) was pointed out as his, whom the dinnerless claimed as their patron.

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE.—In Weakness of the Stomach.—Dr. D. P. McClure, Rantoul, Illinois, says, "I have successfully used it in diseases arising from a weak condition of the digestive apparatus."

IN early colonial days the best rum and tobacco came from Aux Cayes in San Domingo, and the best of anything came to be known as Aux Cayes, or O.K. In the Jackson campaign, when the general's illiteracy was the stock-in-trade of his Whig opponents, an endorsement he had made, "This is O.K.," was taken up by the humorist Seba Smith ("Major Jack Downing") and declared to be an abbreviation of the general's customary endorsement of papers as "Oll Krect." Instead of denying the story, the Democrats adopted the letters as a sort of party cry, and fastened them on their banners.

DREER'S "Garden Calendar for 1888, a Guide to the Successful Management of the Flower and Kitchen Garden," is announced as the half-century number, and on the back of the very tasteful cover the seed warehouse and nursery which Hirst & Dreer founded in 1838 are contrasted with the splendid establishments owned by Henry A. Dreer in 1888. The calendar is profusely illustrated, and contains much valuable information.

THE Jack Robinson alluded to in the proverb "before you can say Jack Robinson" is said to have been Sir Thomas Robinson, otherwise known as "Long Sir Thomas," and "Jack Robinson," secretary to George II. Pitt and Fox gave him the last name on account of his servility towards the king. In an anecdote left in manuscript by Lord Eldon the following occurs:

"During the debates on the India Bill, Sheridan, on one evening when Fox's majorities were decreasing, said, 'Mr. Speaker, this is not at all to be wondered at, when a member is employed to corrupt everybody in order to obtain votes.' Upon this there was a great outcry made by almost everybody in the House. 'Who is it? Name him! Name him!' 'Sir,' said Sheridan to the Speaker, 'I shall not name the person. It is an unpleasant and invidious thing to do so, and therefore I shall not name him. But don't suppose, sir, that I abstain because there is any difficulty in naming him: I could do that, sir, as soon as you could say Jack Robinson.'"

But was this the origin of the proverb, or a punning allusion to it? Grose says the expression originated from a very volatile gentleman named Jack Robinson, who would call on his neighbors and be gone before his name could be announced. But he gives neither date nor authority. The following lines "from an old play" are elsewhere given as the original phrase:

'A warke it ys as easie to be doone
As tys to saye, Jacke! robys on."

(See "Wheeler's Noted Names of Fiction.")

But what was the old play? Brewer says "before you can say Jack Robinson" occurs in one of Hudson's songs.

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE.—Strengthens the intellect.—Dr. D. P. McClure, Rantoul, Illinois, says, "I find it very beneficial to strengthen the intellect."

A CORRESPONDENT wishes to know why March hares should be considered madder than hares at any other season. His question was anticipated in "Heywood's Epigrams" as long ago as 1567:

As mad as a March hare. Where madness compares,
Are not midsummer hares as mad as March hares?

Nares's Glossary explains the proverb as follows: "We read that hares are said to be unusually wild in the month of March, which is their rutting-time. An old sportsman, however, says that hares in the month of March, when the winds are usually high, quit the cover to avoid the continual disturbance arising from the falling of decayed twigs and the rustling of dried leaves." But in the "Apophthegmes of Erasmus" (1542) March hare is resolved into *marsh* hare: "Hares are wilder in marshes than elsewhere, because of their greater flatness, and the absence of hedges and cover."

From the President of Allegheny College, Pa.

Your firm has made a success of the Magazine, I think, by the publication of a story complete in each number. I see it, and enjoy it very much.

Yours truly,

D. H. WHEELER.

THE last three days of March are known as "the borrowed days." At the firesides of the Scottish peasantry the origin of these days is given in this quaint rhyme:

March said to Aperill,
I see three hogs upon a hill,
And if you'll lend me dayes three,
I'll find a way to make them dee;
The first o' them was wind and wet,
The second o' them was snaw and sleet,
The third o' them was sic a freeze
It froze the birds' nests to the trees;
When the three days were past and gane,
The three silly hogs came hirplin' hame.

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE.—Nervous Prostration and Weakness of the Alimentary Canal.—Dr. E. M. Gavitt, Toledo, Ohio, says, "It is a valuable remedy in nervous prostration and weakness of the alimentary canal."

AMONG the younger writers who have recently appeared, none have excited such general interest and admiration as Amélie Rives. Her first novel is therefore an event in American literature. This will appear in *Lippincott's Magazine* for April. It is called "The Quick or the Dead?" and is a story of extraordinary power.

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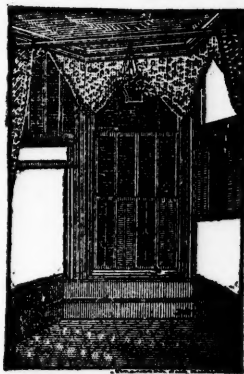
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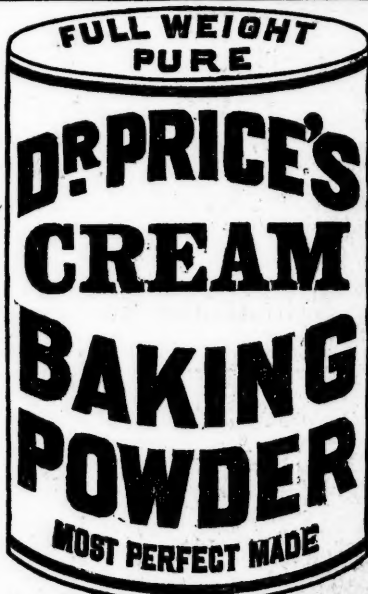
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